

most office and  
to get some stamps  
are four Couches from  
write from every day  
and then to post  
in only I have  
and the do not care  
is putting them on I think  
brother this is all this time  
remember me to all dear friends  
me and all except the sincere  
fection of your  
Serving Son

# BENJAMIN JEFFERY

(1844-1912)

*Life and Letters  
of an Otago Settler*

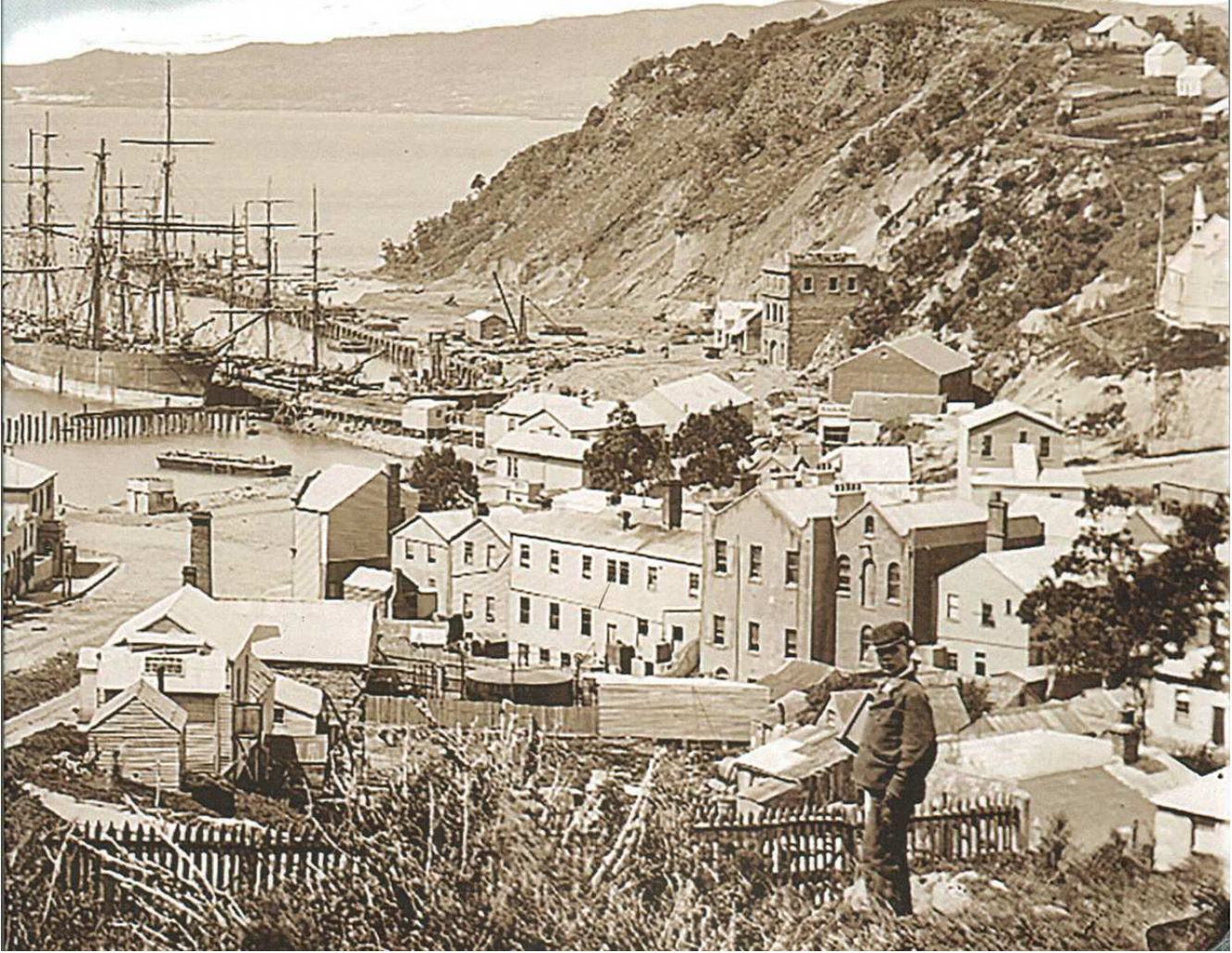
*Ben Jeffery*

*P.S. Address the same as  
before*

*East Tairāwhiti 1872  
December 17*

*My Dear Mother, this is the  
greatest pleasure I have ever felt  
in writing to you and I sincerely  
hope that you are all doing well.  
I hope dear Father and Martha  
that all are quite well. I am  
writing in a tent we are all in  
tents we had a splendid passage  
out on our journey.*

Geoffrey Barber



Title:

Benjamin Jeffery (1844-1912)

Life and Letters of an Otago Settler

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*My Dear Mother, this is the gratest [sic] pleasure I have ever felt in writing to you*

Benjamin Jeffery on arrival in New Zealand  
17th December 1872



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# Preface

BEN JEFFERY WAS BORN IN 1844 at Little Horsted in Sussex, England. He started his working life as an agricultural labourer (gardener) and in 1872, at 27 years of age, emigrated alone to New Zealand. Six of his letters to his mother and father survive describing his voyage and first three years in the colony. These letters were doubtlessly kept by his mother Harriet who would have treasured them knowing she was never to see her son again. The letters came to me in a handkerchief box and had passed from Harriet to her daughter Martha, then to her daughter Ada and from there to Ada's son Leslie (my grandfather) and then to my parents who had emigrated to Australia in 1950.

Ben's first eight years in New Zealand were spent working at Shag Valley Station and living at the nearby Waihemo Hotel. A well-documented court case between Ben and the owner of the hotel, Johann (John) Luks, together with photographs, maps and plans of the area, shines a light on this period of his life. Ben then spent the next thirty years living at or around Wedderburn working as a rabbitier, gardener and finally as barman at the Crown Hotel, taking up roles in the community which included serving as post-master and on the school board. He died at Naseby Hospital in 1912. Ben was an ordinary person and that was the attraction of researching his story and the history of his time. It is stories such as these that bring history to life.

I first published the letters in 1988 and since then further research was undertaken by my nephew Brendan Barber who, in 2009, visited Otago and the places where Ben lived and worked. Brendan's research has now been incorporated into the booklet and he deserves acknowledgement for the detailed work he has done. I visited Otago in 2019 for the first time in order to see the places for myself and do more research. During this visit the letters were donated to the Hocken Library in Dunedin, the archival repository for the University of Otago, in the interests of their long-term preservation.

A digital copy of this booklet (PDF) is available at The Internet Archive ([www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)) for free download.

*Geoffrey Barber*

November 2019

[www.nynne.org](http://www.nynne.org)





## Early Family Life

**B**ENJAMIN JEFFERY WAS BORN on 22 September 1844 in the rural parish of Little Horsted in Sussex, England. He was the youngest of William and Harriet Jeffery's four children. The 1851 census for Little Horsted recorded the family as:

William Jeffery,	40 years, agricultural labourer
Harriett Jeffery,	39 years, wife
Alfred Jeffery,	14 years, agricultural labourer
Martha Jeffery,	11 years
Charles Jeffery,	9 years, scholar
Benjamin Jeffery,	6 years

Ten years later, his eldest brother Alfred had moved about 16 miles away to the village of Rusthall near Tunbridge Wells and was residing there with relatives. He worked for many years as a hay trusser, married Mary Ann Holmwood in 1866 and had two children. He remained at Rusthall for the rest of his life.

Ben's brother Charles started work some 15 miles away at Hove as a servant (footman). He married Emma Sapp in 1864 at Brighton where they had their first child, and by 1871, they had moved back to Little Horsted with their five children.

Sister Martha had stayed at home until she married Silas Morris in 1869 and in 1871 was still living with her parents with Silas and their first-born son Ernest. Both Martha and her brother Charles were to remain living close to their parents although, according to Ben's letters, they both considered emigrating: Charles to the USA and Martha to New Zealand.

In 1871 Ben was 26 years old working as a gardener and living with his brother Alfred and family at Rusthall. Alfred and his wife Mary Ann had a son Percy, aged 2 years. Ben had fond memories of Percy and the other children as they are often mentioned in his letters: "*tell Dear Percy not to forget to learn to write to me*" and "*remember me to ... all the little children especially Percy, Willy and Ernest because they know me*".

In 1872 Ben decided to emigrate to New Zealand, attracted by the advertising and public meetings arranged by Brogden and Sons, a company which had been awarded railway construction contracts by the New Zealand government. They offered two years guaranteed employment on their railway contracts at wages that were more than Ben could ever earn in England. The reality for many of the working

class in England was that their earnings were so low that nothing was left over each week and so the higher wages and the potential to save and accumulate some wealth were a big incentive to emigrate. In addition, Brogdens were offering a scheme which required no upfront payment for the passage to New Zealand.

## Emigration

BEN WAS 27 YEARS OLD when he sailed from London on Wednesday, 4th September 1872 on the *Christian McAusland*, an iron sailing ship of 962 tons built in 1869 at Greenock, Scotland. This voyage was its sixth to New Zealand and according to Ben, carried 304 passengers and 99 seamen<sup>1</sup>. They stopped at Gravesend and departed there at daybreak on the 6th September under tow by a steam tug which took them to Dover.

Ben wrote his first letter on the Sunday aboard the ship as they waited for wind off Beachy Head in the English Channel. He says that “*she is a fast sailer*” having done the last trip in 80 days going and 89 days returning. He gave the letter to the pilot on board who departed the ship at Plymouth: *we have a Channel poilet on bord that will leave us when we get toy Plymouth he will signal a boat to take him on shore*

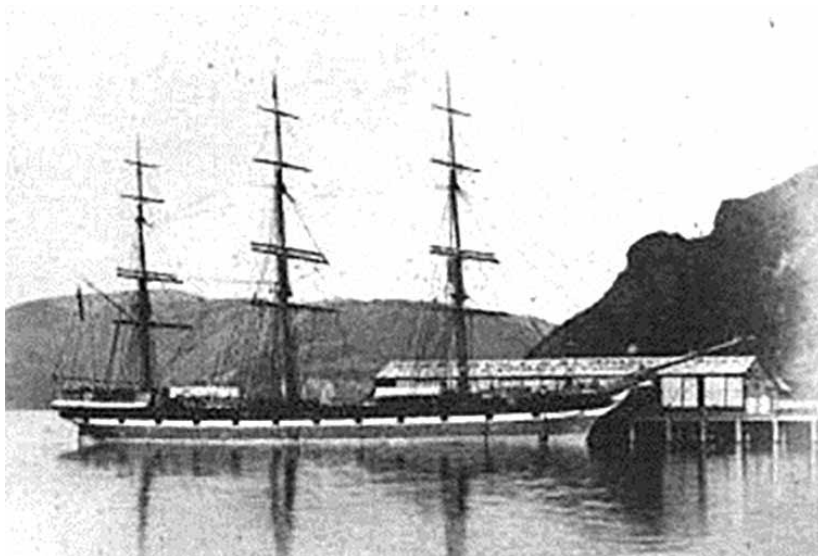


Fig. 1. The ship *Christian McAusland*.

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1 The Otago Gazette, reporting the arrival of the *Christian McAusland*, lists 324 passengers.

*and I shall send this by him I have not got a stamp but I dare say he will put one on for me if I give him the mony.*

Ben describes the accommodation on board as: *we have not hammocke to sleep in but wat they call bunks they are fixtures all round the outside of the ship and our mess tables in the middle we have 8 in a mess we get a plenty to eat and very good food it is.* The Toitu Otago Settlers Museum in Dunedin has an excellent display of such accommodation (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. “An accurate recreation of the steerage quarters of an immigrant sailing ship bound for Otago”. (Toitu Otago Settlers Museum, Dunedin).

The ship arrived at Port Chalmers on 5th December 1872 and Ben wrote his first letter home since departure with “*the gratest pleasure I have ever felt*”, the voyage having taken ninety-two days. As one of the children had scarlet fever, they had to spend ten days in quarantine on a small island (Fig. 5). Apart from this Ben reports that “*there was not a single man that had anything the matter with him*”. On 16 December Ben sailed by steamer to Dunedin and on the 17th is some 16 miles inland writing his second letter and preparing to start work on the railway.

## Brogden and Sons<sup>2</sup>

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND to Ben's emigration begins in 1870 when New Zealand was in a state of stagnation and the Colonial Treasurer Sir Julius Vogel proposed that 10 million pounds be borrowed overseas to be used for public works (roads and railways) and immigration. Among the two politicians sent overseas to borrow the money was Sir Francis Dillon Bell, owner of Shag Valley station where Ben later worked. As they only returned with guarantees for 1 million pounds, Vogel himself went on a loan raising visit to England and the U.S.A. and after borrowing another 1.2 million pounds granted railway construction contracts to the English contracting firm John Brogden and Sons.

Brogdens began sourcing immigrants for these projects in 1872 with encouragement from the New Zealand authorities. They recruited the immigrants, paid the New Zealand government the ten pounds passage money for each and also provided them with an outfit of clothing, their fare to London, their ship's 'kit' and a guarantee of two years employment on wages much more generous than they were getting in England. In his first letter, Ben writes: *my Cloths that Brogden found me are a very good fit and my shoes fit me propper*. In exchange, the immigrants signed promissory notes which the government had stipulated should not exceed sixteen pounds per person. These arrangements were crucial to the success of the scheme as most were too poor to pay any upfront costs.

Ben was probably interviewed by Charles Rooking Carter (1822-1896) who claimed to have personally interviewed all but 70 to 80 of the more than 2,000 people sent out. In his book, Rollo Arnold states:<sup>3</sup>

Brogdens obtained applications through widespread advertising, through the work of salaried agents in various localities, and by sending representatives to visit promising districts. Carter himself addressed no less than 38 public meetings for the firm. As soon as sufficient applicants were offering in an area, arrangements were made for them to come together to be examined.

---

2 The information on John Brogden and Sons has been summarised from *The Farthest Promised Land - English Villagers, New Zealand Immigrants of the 1870s* by Rollo Arnold, Victoria University Press, Wellington (1981).

3 Arnold, R. *The Farthest Promised Land - English Villagers, New Zealand Immigrants of the 1870s*, Victoria University Press, Wellington (1981).

While Carter conducted interviews, a medical practitioner subjected the men to a thorough examination in an adjoining room. Carter directed that the men were to be stripped for the medical examination, and that no men ‘afflicted with ruptures, varicose veins, or what in Cornwall is termed “a miner’s heart”’, were to be accepted. Any men branded with the letter D, as deserters, were also to be rejected. At Uxbridge in Middlesex about ten men were rejected for this reason. Carter applied equally stiff selection criteria to his own interviews, declining any who in his judgement were unfit for the hard work of colonial life. As a result of these procedures, only a minority of applicants were approved, and Carter estimated that he saw at least 6,000 men in selecting Brogdens’ parties. They came from counties as far apart as Cumberland, Cornwall and Sussex.

The first of Brogdens’ immigrants sailed from London on 13 April 1872. However, the arrangements between Brogdens and the New Zealand government were beset with difficulties and misunderstandings and did not lead to the opportunities Brogdens had hoped for. In November 1872 Brogden suspended recruitment and the last ship sailed on 23 December 1872 arriving New Zealand on 5 April 1873, delivering 2,172 immigrants in total. Although short-lived, the Brogdens’ initiative was successful in establishing connections which led to the successful immigration drive in the 1870s which doubled New Zealand’s population. Its contribution is seen as much more significant than the small number of immigrants it delivered.

The immigrants had been offered two years’ work on Brogdens railway contracts in various parts of New Zealand and Ben’s comments on arrival reflect this expectation:

East Taieri 1872  
December 17th

Dear Mother we have not began work yet but we are going to begin to morrow morning we are going to have eight hours for work per day that is all they in the colony and the wages will be eight shillings per day which is more than ever I should have in England

However, contrary to this, Ben did not start on the railway but worked for a fortnight at ditching and then agreed to work with a farmer for four months to assist with the harvest:

Tairia[sic] Plain

Feby 8/1873

I am not far from where I was when I wrote before I am not at work on the railway nor have I been at all I worked a fortnite at ditching when I first came at 8 shillings per day of 8 hours and then agreed with a farmer to work for 4 months for thirty shillings per week and every thing found.

One of the problems Brogdens had was that there was not always the work available for the immigrants despite them having been promised employment. This was possibly the situation faced by Ben.

Although Brogdens held nearly £40,000 in promissory notes, they found it impossible to recover most of these. Ben's comments below may be typical of the perception of many of the immigrants:

Dear Mother I must tell you that I have not had to pay any of my Passage money yet nor do I expect I ever shall for Mrsses Brogdens agents told us when we saw them that we mite go where we liked we have never been asked for our papers or any thing we where landed on the jutty and left to go where we liked and my ship mates are all scattered about the Colony.

and

Brogden is paid by the Colonial Government to bring out people and he does not care abut keeping them on the railway for a grate many of them would not earn him a shiling per day and those that do work on the railway get 8 shillings a day and have no money stoped at all they do not know who came out under Brogden at all.

The consequence of all this was that many immigrants such as Ben simply walked away, found their own employment and felt no obligation to pay on their promissory notes. Ben's letters show that he can hardly believe his luck in getting free passage to a land where conditions were so much better than in England.



## *First Letter*

[text enclosed in brackets are author's comments and not part of the letters]

Christian Mc-Ausland  
English Channel  
Sunday Sept 8th/72 [1872]

My dear Mother

we are chopng about the channel we sailed from London on wednesday afternoon and stoped at Gravesend until friday morning and sailed from there at day brak or was rather towed by a steam tug which towed us as far as Dover that[?] night we could not hoist any sail as the wind was dead against us the thams [Thames] poilet [pilot] left us at deal [Deal] and now we have a Channel poilet on bord that will leave us when we get to Plymouth he will signal a boat to take him on shore and I shall send this by him I have not got a stamp but I dare say he will put one on for me if I give him the mony we are no farther than beachy head [Beachy Head] the wind being Still against us it bloed very hard yesterday and the see [sea] run very high I felt rather quear in the afternoon and before I went to bed I went to the ship side and made myself sick and then I was all rite today the sea is almost like a pond with very little wind we have not hammocke to sleep in but wat they call bunks they are fixtures all round the outside of the ship and our mess tables in the middle we have 8 in a mess we get a plenty to eat and very good food it is there is three hundred and four passengers on board and 99 seemen she is a full riged ship of one thousand five hundred tons burden she has been to New Zealand 5 times before and is a very fast sailor she was only 80 days going last time and 89 coming home Dear Mother pleas tell Alf that I sleep next to that chap that he see at London he and me are quite palls allready they are mostly avery respectable lot of men some single girls are going quite alone and a good many married people with Families we had morning prayers on the poop at eleven o'clock today I do not know when this will reach you for I do not know wen the poilot will go ashore as we do not make any way now he may go in the nite if we get a wind to take us out of the Channel which I hope we shall soon get I am writing this in readiness to give him in case he gos to nite If we are long before he leaves us



**Fig. 3.** Beachy Head, on the coast of Sussex, England.

I will write again to some of you it is beautiful on board today the see is like a pond my Cloths that Brogden found me are a very good fit and my shoes fit me propper I hope Dear Mother you will not be in any troble about me for I am very Comfortable hear I do not expect I shall have the chance of writing again before I get there for we have provisions for six months on board we shall not call any where were before we get to the end of journey we shall not even get to send a letter by a mail as we shall not stop for any thing wen we get a fair wind I think this is all now except to ask you to give my best Love to all my friends and remember me to all the little ones and tell Dear Percy not to forget to learn to write to me I hope Dear Father and Marthar are quite wel and now good by Dear Mother with best Love from your affectionate son Benjamin Jeffery

### *Second Letter*

East Taieri 1872

December 17th

My Dear Mother this is the gratest pleasure I have ever felt in writing to you and I sincerely hope that your ar all doing well I hope Dear Father and Martha Charley Sie and all are quite well I am writing in a tent we are all in tents we had a splended passage out we was ninty two days coming but we had to go into quarantine for ten days because a little childe had the scarlet fever but there was not a single man that had any thing the matter with him Dear Mother we have not began work yet but we are going to begin to morrow morning we are going to have eight hours for work per day that is all they in the colony and the wages will be eight shillings per day which is more than ever I should have in England we came into port Chalmbers on the 5th and was put ashore on a little Island because we should not carry the fever into the town and they took us away yesterday by a steamer to dunedin and from there about 16 miles up the country we have been found in provisions up till to day but to day we have to pay for our one [own] there is five of us in our tent and we all mess togeather the beef is 3p per lb and seven pence for a four lbs loafe sugar 6d butter 1s our bill for three days five of is us came to 1 pound 2s 6d but we had to by some thing to cook in a fry pan and drum to make tea in and drinkin cups came to eight

and sixpence so the food only cost 14 shillings we can by a whole sheep for 3s 6d and a large one to we have no Lodgins to pay as they find our tents we are not obliged to work on the railway but that is a good thing for a start without looking for work and is not many hours per day it is a vally between to mountains that we ar going to work in the Country is very hilly all I have seen it is now the hay making and sheep shearing season the wheat and oats are just comeing out in ear and fruit is just geting ripe Dear Mother I shall be able to tell you more about things in my next I have not much time now as the mail is going out on the 17th and I have about four miles to go to post this to night it is 6 oclock now pm we have been pitching our tents to day we can have a pound of meat at every meal a day for about ten shillins per week we shall begin work at eight o clock in the morning and have an hour at twellve and leave off at five so I shall have more time when we get setteled down there is two mails a month from Duedin Dear Mother when you write direct my letters to the General post office Dunedin Otago New Zealand til called for as I do not know what part we shall be when it comes and I can write to the post office for them if I am not near enough to go for them it is near christmas now and it is like june at home I hope you will all have a merry christmas and a happy new year there is a little Church about a mile from our tents I shall be so glad to church again for we have not had any service for some time Dear Mother I have not told you that I am quite well and happy and I hope it may please God that you are all the same all my mess mates come from Sussex three from brighton [Brighton] and one from Mayfield I must conclude now for the preasant for I want to scratch a few lines to Alf and Ma and it is getting late so with my kindest love to all I remain your Loving Son Benjamin Jeffery tell me all about Charly when you write if he is going to America

Adress

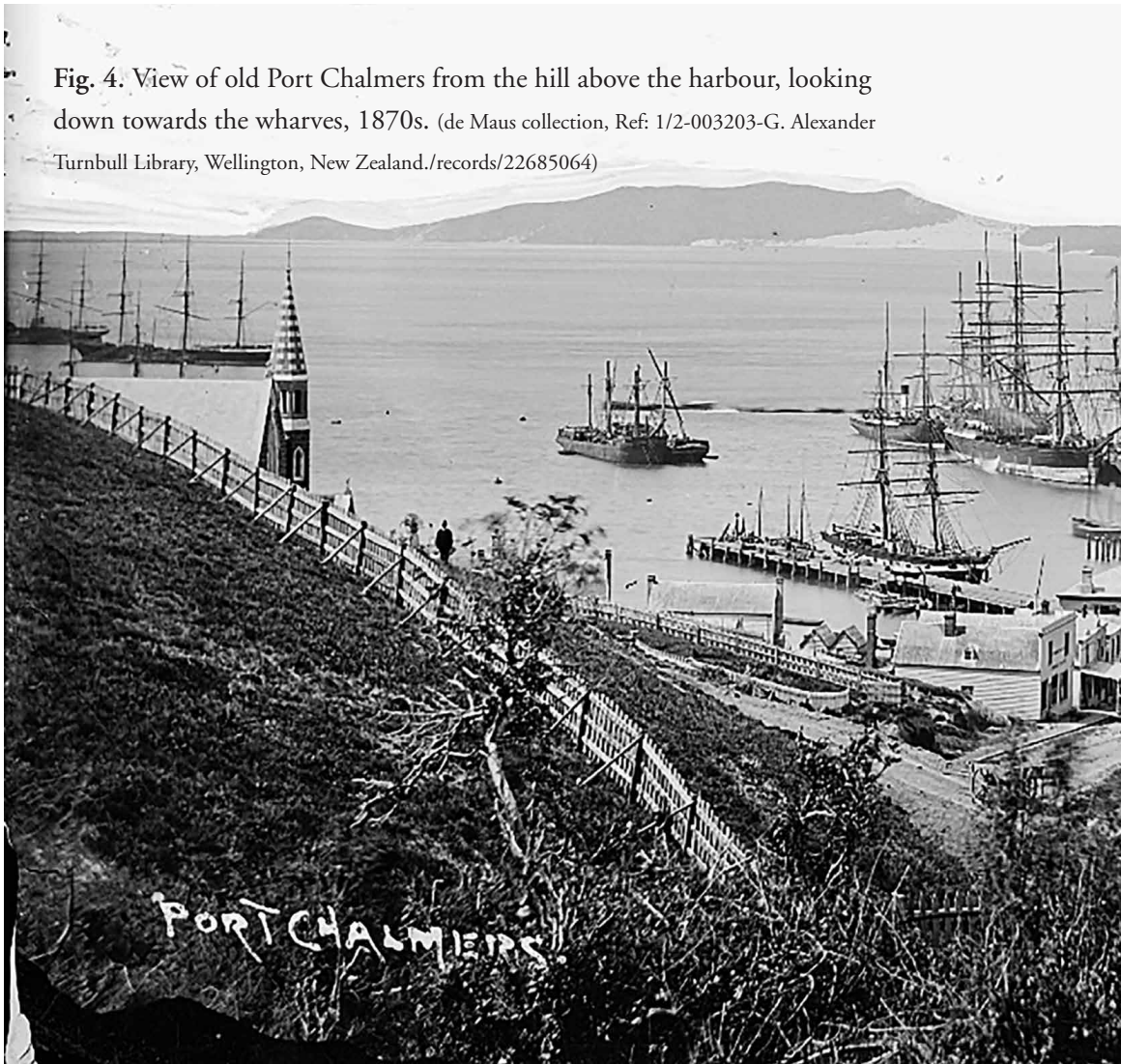
Benjamin Jeffery

General Post Office

Dunedin Otago

New Zeland      to be called for

Fig. 4. View of old Port Chalmers from the hill above the harbour, looking down towards the wharves, 1870s. (de Maus collection, Ref: 1/2-003203-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand./records/22685064)



### *Third Letter*

Tairia Plain

Feb 8/1873

My Dear Mother and Father

I sincerely hope that this will find you all at home as well and comfortable as I am my self I am not far from where I was when I wrote before I am not at work on the railway nor have I been at all I worked a fortnite at ditching when I first came at 8





shillings per day of 8 hours and then agreed with a farmer to work for 4 months for thirty shillings per week and every thing found men that come on for the harvest get from two pound to fifty shillings per week and their food but that only last for 5 or 6 weeks we all have our food together Master men and all the same and like as only a very fiew know how to live in England we work very hard at the harvest but we only work 8 hours a day the same as any thing else it is all cut by machien but I have never seen near so heavy crops at home some wheat yealding from 70 to 80 bushels per acer Dear Mother I must tell you that I have not had to pay any of my Passage money yet nor do I expect I ever shall for Mrsses Brogdens agents told us when we saw them

Fig. 5. View of Quarantine Island, Port Chalmers.

Photographed in the 1880s by David Alexander De Maus. Ref: 1/2-003221-G. Alexander  
Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/23067900

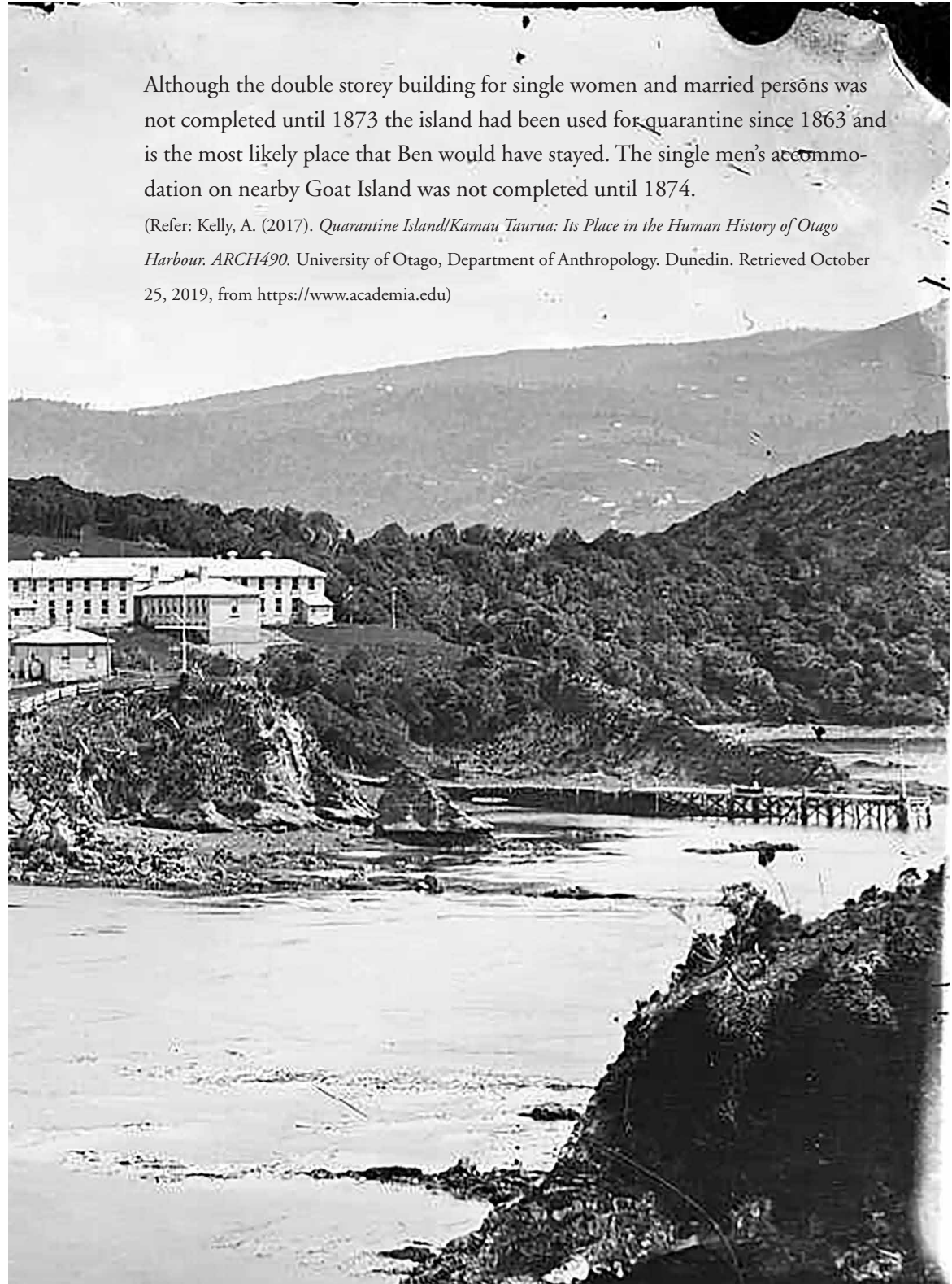


QUARANTINE ISLAND.  
PORT CHALMERS.



Although the double storey building for single women and married persons was not completed until 1873 the island had been used for quarantine since 1863 and is the most likely place that Ben would have stayed. The single men's accommodation on nearby Goat Island was not completed until 1874.

(Refer: Kelly, A. (2017). *Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua: Its Place in the Human History of Otago Harbour*. ARCH490. University of Otago, Department of Anthropology. Dunedin. Retrieved October 25, 2019, from <https://www.academia.edu>)



that we mite go where we liked we have never been asked for our papers or any thing we where landed on the jutty and left to go where we liked and my ship mates are all scattered about the Colony it is to populate the Colony that they are bringing people out hear Brogden is paid by the Colonial Government to bring out people and he does not care abut keeping them on the railway for a grate many of them would not earn him a shiling per day and those that do work on the railway get 8 shillings a day and have no money stoped at all they do not know who came out under Brogden at all a grate part of the work is let out by the yard to the men at 8 1/2 d per yard and now I must tell you that I have bought a horse to ride any where that I want to go I get any amount of riding after stock but of course I ride a horse of the Masters at my work but almost ever one hear has a horse of his one [own] he is 4 years old and I gave eight pounds ten shillings for him being the only money I have spent of all I have earned hear for a man will not be long saving fifty pounds hear if he does not drink but if he does he will never have any thing for drink is very dear hear every thing is 6d per glall [glass ?] and you doe not get a tooth full of spirits for 6d and a common beer glass of beer the same price Dear Mother this is a very windy Country with a grate deal of rain in the winter season it is very hot now but it is not like the weather at home one day may be burning hot and the next morning the tops of the mountains covered with snow but it never lays all day even in winter they say there is some days as hot as summer but still it is very healthy, I wish I had brought out a good lot of seeds with me for flowers and vegatables are very scarce hear we are nearly nine miles from a post office and I must ride over to get some stamps but there are four Couches [coaches] pass about a mite [mile ?] from every day I could send them to post by one of them only I have not the stamps and the do not care to be bothered puting them on I think Dear Mother this is all this time pleas remember me to all dear Percy at home and all exept [accept] the Sincere affection of your

Loving Son

Ben Jeffery

P.S. address the same as before

## Shag Valley Station



Fig. 6. Sir Frances Dilllon Bell, c1881.

SOMETIME IN 1873 Ben started working at Shag Valley station, a notable sheep station at the western foot of the Horse Range, Waihemo County, Central Otago.<sup>4,5</sup> The station was owned by Sir Francis Dillon Bell (1822-98), (known as Dillon Bell) who had been appointed Speaker of the House of Representatives in Wellington in 1871 and knighted in 1873. He had purchased the property in about 1865 from Johnny Jones, a whaler, farmer and merchant who owned vast areas of coastal Otago. Wise's Directory for 1878 lists three sheep runs owned by Sir F.D. Bell: Ida Valley (32,800 sheep), Shag Valley (61,166 sheep) and Palmerston (4380 sheep).<sup>6</sup>

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4 Shag Valley Station is on the Heritage New Zealand Register of Historic Places (#7616). It is located at 2353 Dunback-Morrison Road, (State Highway 85), Morrison, Otago. Website: <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/7616>

5 The road that passes by Shag Valley station is now State Highway 85 but is still known by its old name: The Pigroot. It was one of the routes to the Otago goldfields in the 1860s, when bullock-drawn wagons would struggle on the hills and in the mud. The trail had been blazed by sheep farmers in 1855 and made into a bullock track two years later with funding from Johnny Jones.

6 'BELL, Sir Francis Dillon', from *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, edited by A. H. McLintock, originally published in 1966.

*Fourth Letter*

Shag Valley, Waihemo

Nov 8th/73 [1873]

My Dear Mother and Father

I have been rather long in writing this time but I have been waiting for letters from home I received three a week ago from you and Charles and Wm baker of Tun [Tunbridge] Wells but I hope Dear parents this will find you all in good health I am quite well my self I am still at the same place there are a grate maney men working heare I have 4 always with me in the garden and some times more I have onely to say that I want so many men and they are there we shall have a good place hear in a little time I have made a new orchard this spring I had 12 men trenching for a good while I have planted a thousand fruit trees I never saw my people untill I had been hear three months as they where away at Wellington Ser F.D. Bell is the Speaker in the house of Representatives so I had all my work to do by plans and letter but I am pleased to be able to tell you that I gave them the best satisfaction I like him very much but I do not like the Lady quite so well but I do not care about her as I have my way in every thing Dear Mother you said Sie and Martha wanted to come to New Zealand now I am certain that it is the best thing that ever I did in my life but there are grate draw-backs for married people with young families I do not say this to hinder them but it is my duty to be honest with those that are near and dear to me now that there is a plenty of work is certain for a good steady man but there is not alwais a place for his famy [family] where he works they must live in a tent or stop in some town and house rent is very dear in the towns but I will write to Martha next mail and if they do realy wish to come I will make the arrangement for them as I am better up to the emmigration

*(rest of letter missing)*

Ben's position at the station appears to be that of head gardener. In one letter he states that he has supervised the planting of an orchard of one thousand fruit trees. This is consistent with an unconfirmed story handed down by Ben's family in England: that he planted the first Cox's orange pippin apple trees in New Zealand.

Ben states that he likes Sir F.D. Bell very much and it is interesting to note the following comment about him:<sup>7</sup>

by 1874, he had over 226,000 acres and nearly 80,000 sheep: he was not really interested in sheep, however, though he was a keen gardener and left the management to others, eventually to his second son Alfred.

In planting the orchard, Ben states that because Bell had been away in Wellington he has “*had all my work to do by plans and letter but I am pleased to be able to tell you that I gave them the best satisfaction I like him very much but I do not like the Lady quite so well*”

Shag Valley Station is still owned by the Bell family and in 1987 the then owner, Alfred Bell, wrote:<sup>8</sup>

The homestead was set out with a very large garden and orchard and I quite believe that Mr. Jeffery had four or more working with him while it was being developed. I think the 1,000 fruit trees involved a fair bit of ‘poetic licence’ but there are certainly a hundred or so fruit trees that probably date back to that time.

### *Fifth Letter*

*(final page of a letter, rest is missing)*

*(probably a letter to Charles)*

... of my one [own] it is kept by the Staiton [Station] and I have the chance to keep as many as I like free of cost I intend to buy a mare or to and breed from there the fowls will grow into money in a year or to without much trouble I am sending two papers by this and I have sent one by nearly every mail for a goo [good] while but if you do not get them better than I do it is not much good for I have only received 3 since I have been in the Contry I have not got any since I

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7 ‘BELL, Sir Francis Dillon’, from *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, edited by A. H. McLintock, originally published in 1966.

8 Letter from Alfred D. Bell to Geoffrey Barber, 18 March 1987.

have been hear Mother ask me to put my address I will write again next mail to some of you I hope Alf and Ma are quite well and My Little Percy I promised to write to him an so I will conclud with kindest Love to all of you and remain your affec Brother Ben Jeffery

Shag Valley Station

Otago Waihemo

New Zealand

### *Sixth Letter*

Shag Valley Agust 12/75 [1875]

My Dear Father and Mother

I am ashamed that I have so long in wrighting to you but I was waiting to go to Dunedin to send you a Little money as I could not get an order hear I hope you are all well and I am very happy to say I am well and comfortable I wrote to Martha on 24 May I suppose she has about got it by this time Dear Father and Mother I am most Happy to Inclose a P.O for five Pounds and I hope you will receive it all right Dear Mother you must till me how you ar of and if you are in nead I will send you an other five I have been very stingy and mean not to have sent it before but I was making a point of puting a hundred pounds in the bank and I spent 47 Pounds buying horses



**Fig. 7.** The shearing sheds at Shag Valley station.

(Photo: Brendan Barber, 18 November 2009)



last year so that I did not gain my object untill I took my wages this year tel Charly<sup>9</sup> I will write to him next mail I hope he gets plenty of work all Building Trades are good in Otago there is a Carpenter working hear he gets twelve shillings per day of 8 hours and his food and lodging house rent is very dear in Dunedin twelve bob a week for a small cottage Harry Holmwood<sup>10</sup> ask me what his prospects would be supposing he should come to do anything out of his trade but his trade is the best thing he could work at and there is plenty of it to do but a married man must often be away from his family for he may go from one end of the Island to the other if he works for any firm in town I will write to him shortly Dear Parents you will be geting some winter by the time you receive this I hope you will have plenty to keep you warm we have had a very milde winter an very dry there was a little sleet this morning the first we have had this year I beleve my bos is coming to England at the new year and one of the sons there are two there now I am glad Dear Alf has given up that hard work I am shure he will be better for it you must kindly remember me to M, A and Em our Silas and all the little Children espesialy Percy, Willy and Ernest because they know me I wish they where hear to have a ride on one of my horses named Vulcan I bought him for 17 pounds the only sport we get hear is pig hunting 6 of us went one day



**Fig. 8.** The shearing sheds at Shag Valley station (from a different angle).

(Photo: Brendan Barber, 18 November 2009)

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9 Ben's brother Charles was a carpenter's labourer in 1871, then a carpenter in 1881 and in 1901 a builder (employer) according to the UK census records.

10 Harry Holmwood is the brother of Alfred Jeffery's first wife, Mary Ann Holmwood (1841-1882).



**Fig. 9.** The shearers quarters at Shag Valley station. Ben Jeffery may have lived here when he was first employed as a gardener. (Photo: Brendan Barber, 18 November 2009)

and killed 25 in about 5 hours I have a little gold got from the river just below hear I will send it next time to Charly Dear Father you must get a little drop of the very best when you get this do not be afraid to spend it to make your selves comfortable and as it will be geting on towards Christmas I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy new year it seems very quere to have our Christmas in the Summer time but we make that a time for sports out dores the sheep shearing is on to at that time so there are plenty of people about you can ask some of the shearers at home what they think about a man shearing one hundred and forty per day for a hoal [whole] week and they get a pound per hundred for shearing there was a Moari hear last year shore 151 in one day of 10 hours I think that would surprise some of them the largest number that was shorne in an day last year by 40 men was five thousand one hundred and seven I am geting on first rate in the garden there is five more with me now sometimes there are more I am my one [own] bos in every thing and I get on first rate with them all our people are away at Wellington now I suppose they will be away a good while this time for I think they will have a long session this year and my bos is Speaker in the house I will send a Paper with this and pleas let me know if you get it I think I must now come to a close and with my best Love to all and every one altho I do not name them all I wish you all God Spead in prosperity so again with kind Love I remain your Affectionate

Son Ben Jeffery

Following on from his comments about the garden, Alfred Bell wrote about the shearing:<sup>11</sup>

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11 Letter from Alfred D. Bell to Geoffrey Barber, 18 March 1987.

I was interested to see the bit in his letter about the shearing. I was led to believe that the woolshed was built about the mid-70s but it would seem that it must have been before that or he would have mentioned something about a “new” woolshed in his letter. The timber for our woolshed came, I was told, from Western Australia. Some of it had been used in a previous building with various mortices and splices still in it and a lot of the boards are Baltic pine. The original shed is still here and in use today, and to turn the clock full circle, we are again using blade shearers. We shear in late winter and the blades give more protection. Your Mr. Jeffery would no doubt be interested to learn that our present 7 blade shearers shear up to 1300 in an 8.5-hour day – not all that much more than they did then.

Ben prospered at Shag Valley station. He could keep as many horses as he liked free of charge and took advantage of this to make extra money. In the last surviving letter (12 August 1875) he encloses a five-pound postal order for his parents and states that he has one hundred pounds in the bank and last year spent forty-seven pounds buying horses. His family in England would surely have been impressed. He went pig hunting for sport “*6 of us went one day and killed 25 in about 5 hours*” and he also mentions some gold found “*from the river just below here*” which is not surprising given that he was living close to the areas of the 1860s gold rush.

Although the sixth letter is the last one surviving, he continued to write until 1879 and then, according to the family, “*he was never heard from again*”. In 1890, Ben’s sister Martha Morris published a missing person notice in the *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* which had a sizeable readership in Australia and New Zealand.<sup>12</sup> It was picked up and published in the *Auckland Star* newspaper on 31 July 1890:

**MISSING FRIENDS.**

Benjamin Jeffery sailed in the *Christian McAuckland* for Dunedin, and in January, 1879, was staying at the Waihemo Hotel, Waihemo, Otago. Sister Martha.

Ben had left the Waihemo Hotel after his lease expired in September 1880, moving inland to work as a rabbitier at the Ida Valley station in Central Otago. This would appear to be the point at which communication was lost.

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12 *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 8 June 1890, p.12

## The Waihemo Hotel

ON 6 AUGUST 1876 Ben signed a lease with the owner of the Waihemo Hotel for a cottage, orchard and gardens located at the hotel.<sup>13</sup> Ben's final surviving letter in 1875 gives his address as Shag Valley station suggesting that he lived there until he took this lease. The hotel has long been demolished but was located on the main road just past the entrance to Shag Valley Station. The location would have allowed Ben to live independently of the station but close enough to still go there for work. The hotel was situated on 100 acres of land and was known to exist as early as 1865 when it is mentioned as a stop for the Cobb & Co coach on their north-western branch route to Dunstan (now known as Clyde) in central Otago.<sup>14</sup> The exact location of the hotel, cottage and orchard is Section 54 on the Waihemo District Survey maps (Figs. 10 & 11).<sup>15</sup> The full property (100 acres) included Section 1 as well.<sup>16</sup>

The hotel owner was Johann (John) Bernhard Ludwig Luks who had arrived at Dunedin in 1862 and became a naturalised citizen in 1863, giving his occupation as a hotelkeeper. By 1872, when Ben arrived in New Zealand, the Cobb & Co coach travelled three times per week from Palmerston to Naseby (along the "Pigroot") with Luks having arranged for at least some overnight stops at the Waihemo Hotel.<sup>17</sup> Luks would have been in competition with the Pigroot Hotel (also known as the Halfway House) which was 12 miles further inland and the place for overnight accommodation for the Cobb & Co coach runs from Dunedin to Clyde.

An insight into these "coaching days" is given in an article written in 1927 in which the writer describes his experience on a trip from Dunedin through the "Pigroot" to Clyde, including his meal stop at the Waihemo Hotel and overnight stay at the Pigroot Hotel (see Appendix I):

A short distance further on Ned pulled up at the gate of the Coal Creek Station [now known as Shag Valley station], where we bade good-bye to our fellow-passengers, Sir Dillon and Lady Bell and son. The horses were whipped up, and in a few minutes, Ned pulled up at the Waihemo Hotel, a building constructed of stone from Green

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13 Archives NZ (DAAC/0140/82, Supreme Court, civil case 5550).

14 Otago Daily Times, Issue 1071, 26 May 1865.

15 Archives NZ (DAAC/0140/82, Supreme Court, civil case 5550).

16 A newspaper article in 1893 (Evening Star, issue 9088, 21 March 1893) reported that John Shaw of Balclutha had been the mortgagee of the Waihemo Hotel property since 19 December 1872, described as "the mortgagee of sections 1 and 54, with the Waihemo Hotel and other buildings erected upon the land".

17 Mount Ida Chronicle, Volume II, Issue 152, 26 January 1872.



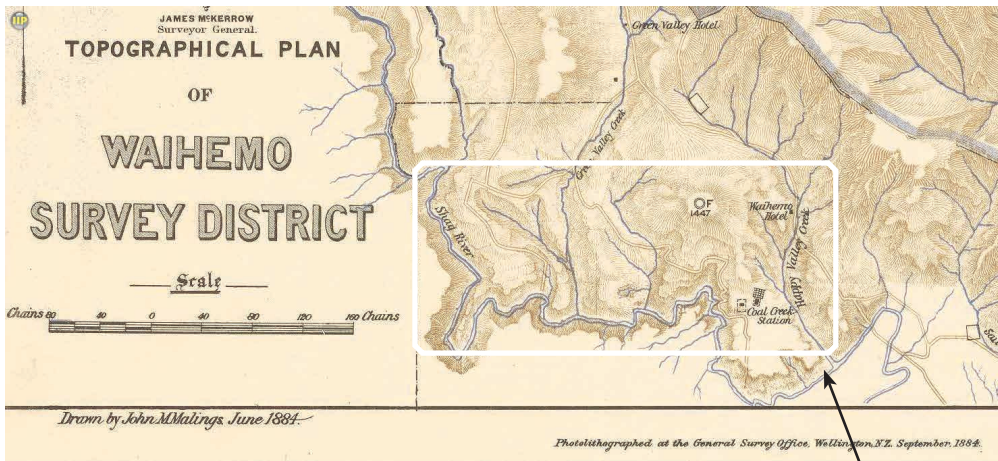


Fig. 10. Topographical map made in 1884 showing the location of the Waihemo Hotel on the main road between Palmerston and Ranfurly. It is not far past the turn-off into Shag Valley Station, called Coal Creek Station on this map.

(Topographical plan of Waihemo Survey District/drawn by John M. Malings, June 1884. National Library website: [http://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps\\_pid=IE3734495](http://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE3734495). Accessed 16 Jan 2019. Sourced from Land Information NZ. Crown Copyright reserved.)

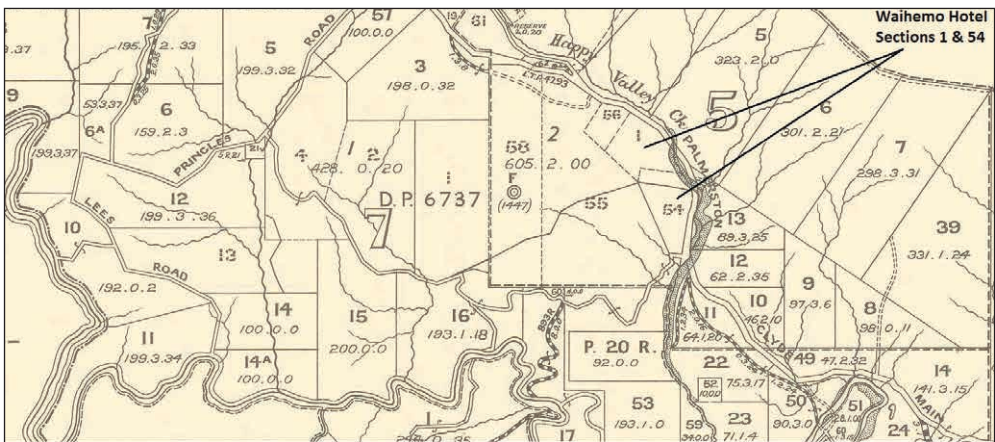


Fig. 11. The Waihemo Hotel property comprised sections 1 and 54 above, with the hotel, general store, accommodation buildings, blacksmith shop, stock yards and orchard located in section 54.

(Waihemo Survey District by New Zealand. Department of Lands and Survey, 1951. National Library website: [http://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps\\_pid=IE3735321](http://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE3735321). Accessed 16 Jan 2019. Sourced from Land Information NZ. Crown Copyright reserved.)

Valley, in the neighbourhood. After doing justice to a very fine dinner provided by the proprietor, Mr Luke [Luks], we were invited into an adjoining orchard, belonging to our host, and helped ourselves to as much of the luscious fruit as we could eat. The now familiar call from Ned made us hurry for the coach, and with another fresh team we were soon off on the last stage for the day, a distance of 12 miles, with Pigroot at the end of it.

Ben leased the garden and orchard as well as two smaller gardens and a cottage where he likely would have lived. The lease was for a four-year term from 1 September 1876 for an annual rent of forty-five pounds paid quarterly.<sup>18</sup> When the hotel was advertised for sale in 1873, the orchard was described as: “*three acres laid off as a garden, which is in a high state of cultivation, the fruit trees (12 years old) are of the most choice assortment and all in full bearing*” and that “*for produce of all kinds there is a ready sale at the store*”. Ben would have seen this as an opportunity to earn extra money while he was working at Shag Valley station. The orchard can be seen in a rare photograph of the Waihemo Hotel held by New Zealand’s National Museum at Wellington (Fig. 14).



Fig. 12: A Cobb & Co coach. (Toitu Otago Settlers Museum, Dunedin).

(Photo: Geoffrey Barber, 26 October 2019)

Fig. 13. This bridge over McCormick’s Creek, known as Bowker’s Bridge, is the last of the original arched stone bridges still to be seen on the old coach road to Central Otago. It lies just a few kilometres south of the Waihemo Hotel location and was in use up until 1962. (Photograph: Geoffrey Barber, 26 October 2019)



18 Archives NZ (DAAC/0140/82, Supreme Court, civil case 5550).



When Ben signed the lease in 1876, the licensee of the hotel was Roger Kett who had taken it over from Luks in 1875.<sup>19</sup> Later in 1876, a new licensee, Mr W.J.F Campbell, was appointed offering “first class accommodation for travellers and boarders with excellent stabling, a General Store and a Butcher’s Shop”.<sup>20</sup> On 12 October 1876 he was charged with allowing music and dancing at his licenced establishment but pleaded ignorance as a new licensee and was just cautioned!<sup>21, 22</sup>

Just over two years into the lease, in February 1879, Ben owed Luks £30/8s/9d and Luks decided to enter Ben’s property and distrain goods to that value, which included all the fruit as well as tools and implements, and to take possession of the property. Ben paid the debt within five days of this action, but Luks would not accept it and retained the distrained goods. Ben considered this action unlawful, equivalent to breaking and entering a property that he lawfully possessed and causing damage to the garden, trees and fruit and wrongfully depriving him of a large quantity of fruit and the use and possession of his goods and chattels. On 18 July 1879, the Supreme Court at Dunedin found in his favour and awarded him £150 damages, although he had asked for £700.<sup>23,24</sup> However, Ben may not have been able to collect his money as Luks filed for bankruptcy the following month with debts of £4162 5s 9d and assets of £4584 7s 8d. His hotel in Dunedin, The Black Bull in George Street, was advertised to be auctioned on 28 August.<sup>25</sup>

In considering Luks’ action in taking Ben’s property there may have been other contributing causes in addition to the debt owed. Luks had advertised the sale of the property on 1 January 1879 (although not for the first time) and the licensee Mr W.J.F. Campbell had died suddenly at the Waihemo Hotel on 31 January 1879. Perhaps Luks was under sufficient financial pressure to cause him to act as he did in early February, rather than negotiate with Ben. After his bankruptcy, Luks remained in Dunedin until 1883 and then went to live in Auckland.<sup>26</sup>

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19 Mt Ida Chronicle, 2 July 1875.

20 Bruce Herald, 17 October 1876.

21 Mt Ida Chronicle, Volume VII, Issue 397, 20 October 1876, page 3.

22 The Waihemo Hotel property (hotel, general store and 100-acre farm) was advertised for sale in 1873 and it seems to have been intermittently on the market at least up until 1883, during which time the hotel was operated by a number of people while still under the ownership of Luks. Luks may have been keen to sell so he could focus on his Black Bull hotel in Dunedin, although his bankruptcy in 1879 suggests that managing his debts may also have been an issue.

23 Documents concerning the trial are held by Archives NZ (DAAC/0140/82, Supreme Court, civil case 5550).

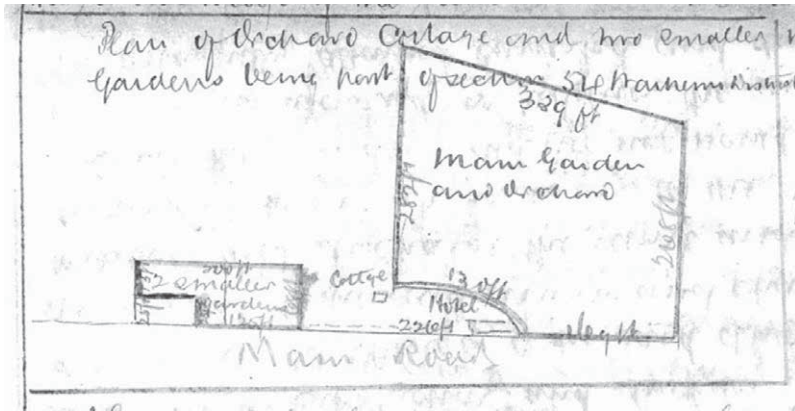
24 The outcome was reported in the Tuapeka Times, Volume XII, Issue 546, 19 July 1879, page 3.

25 *Otago Daily Times*, 12 August 1879 page 1 (bankruptcy of Luks), 23 August 1879 page 4 (sale of hotel).

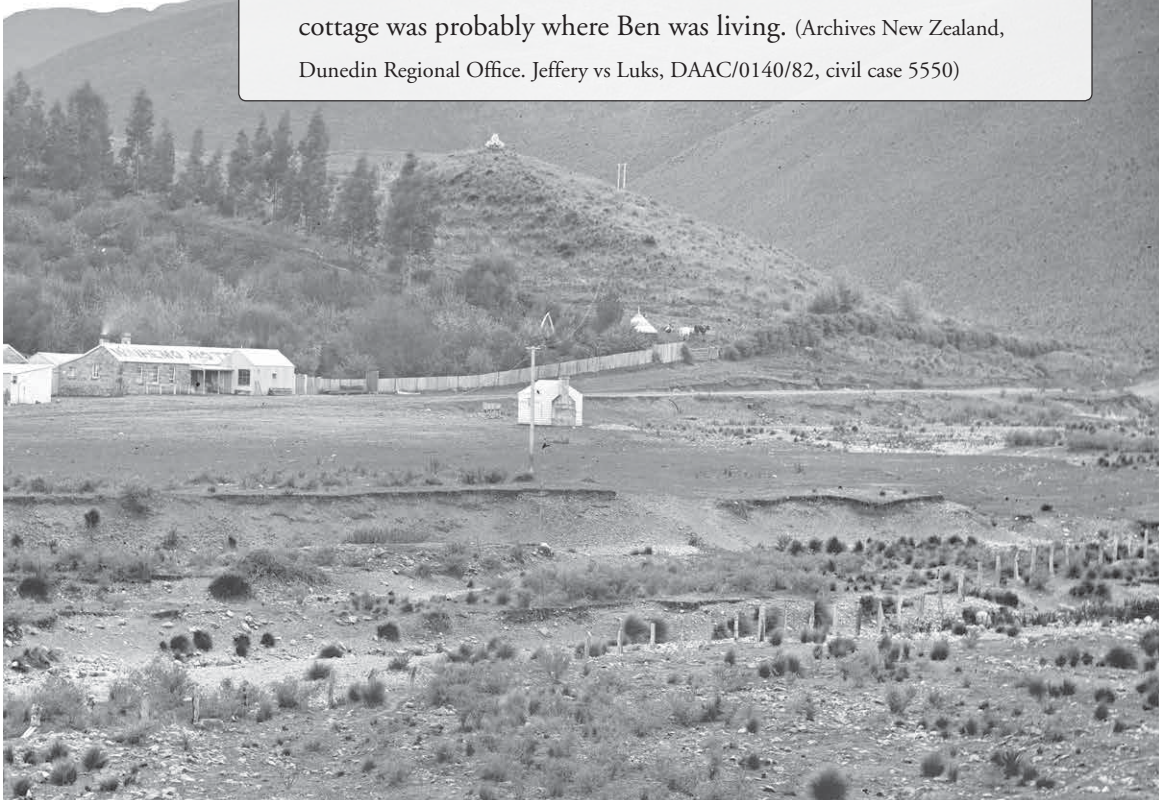
26 NZ Electoral Rolls, 1890, Wakeland St, Auckland; occupation: agent. His brother Renke Frederick Luks is also living in Auckland as a hotelkeeper.

**Fig. 14.** This photo of the Waihemo Hotel was taken in the 1870's when John (Johann) Luks was the proprietor. The main garden and orchard that Ben leased are clearly shown behind the hotel going up the hill and fenced by a boundary of trees. It matches the diagram drawn in the court filings in 1879 (Fig. 15). (Photo Credit: Luk's, Waihemo, Otago, NZ, 1876-1885, by William Hart, Hart, Campbell & Co. Purchased 1943. Te Papa (C.017735). The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa is New Zealand's national museum, located in Wellington.)





**Fig. 15.** The map of the properties subject to the lease of 1876 between John (Johann) Luks and Ben Jeffery taken from the court documents of 1879. The map shows the extent of the main garden and orchard and matches the photo in Fig. 14. The writing at the top says, “Plan of Orchard and Cottage and two smaller gardens being part of section 54 Waihemo District”. The cottage was probably where Ben was living. (Archives New Zealand, Dunedin Regional Office. Jeffery vs Luks, DAAC/0140/82, civil case 5550)







**Fig. 16.** A later photograph of the Waihemo Hotel (c1893-1904) when the proprietor was John Reighles McGregor. (In Website Hocken Snapshot (University of Otago). Retrieved 11th Jan 2019 21:34, from <https://hocken.recollect.co.nz/nodes/view/24529>).

Ben appears to have stayed at Waihemo until his lease expired on 1 September 1880. The Waihemo Hotel continued to operate with various people taking over the license until 1906 when it was reported that no application had been made to renew the license.<sup>27</sup> Sometime later the property was sold to a nearby station (probably Shag Valley station) and the buildings demolished.

In 1917 the *Otago Daily Times* reported the final act in the demise and disappearance of the Waihemo Hotel: the removal of the orchard. The journalist wrote with obvious disgust:<sup>28</sup>

A well-known and hitherto greatly appreciated public benefit in the Waihemo district is about to disappear in consequence of a stern edict issued by the Orchards Department. For several years the fruit garden of the old Waihemo Hotel (one of the regular dinner and breakfast stopping places in the stagecoach days of the past) has been dedicated entirely to the use of the local public by its present owner, -who had purchased and demolished the hotel and its annexes, and thereupon thrown open the acre of fruit

27 Evening Star, Issue 12833, 7 June 1906.

28 *Otago Daily Times*, Issue 17016, 29 May 1917, page 4.

trees for the exclusive use of his neighbours. The place grows quantities of apples, pears, apricots, etc., and is a favourite summer resort for picnic parties, whose conveyances generally leave the premises well stocked with the spoil of the trees. Pears are especially abundant, and in their green cooking stage have annually stocked many a local larder. Owing to the distance of the place from the owner's homestead, where also an extensive orchard absorbs all the available means of attention, the trees are not pruned or sprayed, and, in fact, being mostly of the inferior kind compared with those favoured by the more modern orchardists, would in any case be doubtfully worth such treatment. In view of the value of the fruit to the local public, and of the fact that his own homestead orchard is the only one within several miles of the place in question, the owner requested the Orchards Department to relax the rigidity of its rules in this instance, pointing out, however, that to himself personally this could not be considered any favour, inasmuch as the produce of the place went to whomsoever else it might concern. The reply of the department, being an uncompromising refusal accompanied by a formidable list of Latin atrocities which it declares to be rampant in the place, and a grim threat of prosecutions and penalties, the owner has had to consider whether it is practicable to bring this ancient fruit farm into line with modern orchard practice, and permanently to appease the authorities by undertaking and continuing at that distance, and for the benefit of others, the various operations on which they insist. This being, in the present state of the labour market, at least, beyond reasonable possibility, the alternative of the destruction of the orchard has been officially ordered and will doubtless be considered locally a rather remarkable display on the part of a Government Department of "war economy" in connection with the food supply.

The Waihemo Hotel had prospered during the times of the Cobb & Co coaches but its decline and closure became inevitable with the decision to develop the Otago Central Railway (connecting Dunedin and the Maniototo Plains) through the Taieri gorge and not through the Shag River valley. Construction of the railway began in 1877, arriving at Middelmarsh in 1891 and Ranfurly in 1898. Only a short section of this railway survives today, known as the Taieri Gorge Railway. A branch line from Palmerston along the Shag Valley to Dunback was opened in 1885, falling short of reaching the Waihemo Hotel. An extension of this line to Ranfurly and beyond was proposed as a possible route for the railway to Central Otago, but the Taieri gorge route was chosen instead. This ultimately led to the decline in business for the hotel and its removal some time before 1917. We are fortunate that at least some photographs survive in our libraries and archives (Figs. 14 & 16).



## Ida Valley Station

ON 28 SEPTEMBER 1880, Ben began work at Sir Francis Dillon Bell's Ida Valley station (also known as Run 261) as a rabbitier, working in a two-man team with William Strode. Strode had previously been working with a man named Fraser so would have been the more experienced of the two. They were one of several teams on the station such was the extent of the rabbit problem and were paid one pound a week and 3d per rabbit skin.<sup>29</sup>

Ben started work at Ida Valley station within a month after his lease expired at the Waihemo Hotel. It is probable that the court case had a serious financial impact on Ben given that the distrained goods and fruit crop were likely not returned; Luks' bankruptcy probably meant he never received the £150 damages; and he would have had a substantial legal fee to pay. Rabbiting would have offered the opportunity to earn good money.

There was plenty of work trapping and selling rabbits. The first rabbit plague had hit central Otago in the early 1870s and lasted until about 1895. The rabbits thrived in the semi-arid environment of Central Otago and their effect on the environment was devastating. Their burrowing and feeding could render agricultural land useless and greatly affect the sheep carrying capacity of the runs. While controlling these pests would have been the prime focus there was also a market for the rabbit skins and meat. In 1883, nearly 10 million rabbit skins were exported from New Zealand compared to only 36,000 ten years earlier.<sup>30,31</sup>

In the early days of the plague, rabbits were caught by dogging, digging out, trapping and shooting. The dogs were found to spread the problem rather than contain it and the other methods were very labour intensive. By the 1880s, poison was the most widespread method used and the journal of Ida Valley station show Strode & Jeffery receiving quantities of wheat, phosphorous and rhodium (phosphorized wheat being the poison with rhodium used to entice the rabbits to eat the grain) as well as ammunition for shooting. Trapping was still used where the rabbit carcass

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29 Ida Valley Station records (1863-1957), University of Otago Library, Hocken Collections Archive (MS-0658). This collection includes farm diaries, accounts, letter books and shearing tallies.

30 George Griffiths, *In the Land of Dwindle River – a Waihemo Journal* (1982), Otago Heritage Books, pp. 25,26 says the rabbit canning factory at Dunback was processing 5,000 rabbits a day in 1897.

31 Rabbit plagues occurred again in the 1920s, 1940s and 1980s and rabbit control remains a major issue today.

Fig. 17. The Ida Valley station journal, May 1881, showing quantities of “wheat, phos [phosphorous] and rhod [rhodium]” used by the different rabbit poisoning teams. Strode & Jeffery are the bottom entry. (Ida Valley Station records (1863-1957), University of Otago Library, Hocken Collections Archive, Ref no: MS-0658)

May 1881.		360			
1881 May 31	W. Brotherton.				
	To Stores in May.	313		12	8
	396 lb Wheat 3/6			1	3
	4 1/4 - Phos 2/9			11	8
	4 1/2 rhod 2/2			8	8
	Barrocliff & Robinson				
	To Stores in May.	319		2	18
	528 lb wheat 3/6			1	10
	5 1/4 - Phos 2/9			11	8
	4 1/2 rhod 2/2			8	8
	Newton Ellis				
	To Stores in May.	267		3	3
	528 lb wheat 3/6			1	10
	5 1/4 - Phos 2/9			11	8
	4 1/2 rhod 2/2			8	8
	Strode & Jeffery				
	To Stores in May.	257		2	18
	396 lb wheat 3/6			1	3
	3 - phos 2/9			11	
	3 1/2 rhod 2/2			6	6

Fig. 18. The Ida Valley station journal, June 1881, showing Strode & Jeffery receiving £19 5s for 1540 skins at 3d per skin. (Ida Valley Station records (1863-1957), University of Otago Library, Hocken Collections Archive, Ref no: MS-0658)

June 1881.		365			
1881 June 30	Harrison & Clarke.				
	By 780 rat sks	3 1/2		9	15
	To Wilson ap.	2 1/2		3	11
	McLevit & McDonald				
	By 580 rat sks	3 1/2		6	5
	To Wilson ap.	2 1/2			
	Strode & Jeffery				
	By 1540 msk. 3 1/2			19	5

was to be used for meat, as poisoning rendered it unusable.<sup>32</sup>

The Ida Valley station journal also shows Ben being paid for some planting, so he was still using his gardening skills if required.

32 Peden, R. L. (2007). *Pastoralism and the transformation of the rangelands of the South Island of New Zealand 1841 to 1912 : Mt Peel Station, a case study : a thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.* pp. 131-134

## Wedderburn

BEN LEFT IDA VALLEY STATION in April 1882 and, according to one of his obituaries, was then employed on the Blackstone Hill station and Highfield station after which, in about 1883/84, he went to Wedderburn in the employment of the Mt Ida Pastoral and Investment Company which owned the Eden Creek station and the adjoining Eweburn station.<sup>33</sup> Presumably, Ben obtained employment as either a rabbitier or gardener during these times.<sup>34, 35, 36</sup>

On 1 January 1886 Ben was appointed postmaster at Wedderburn following the death of the towns' first postmaster Chas. McAdam. His Post Office salary on 1 July 1887 was 5 pounds per annum, suggesting a part-time position. He possibly remained postmaster until Maude Messant was appointed postmistress on 16 November 1894, the year the telephone office was opened in Wedderburn. The Messants may have been Ben's friends or landlord (perhaps both) as they were involved with the removal of Ben's "domicile" at Wedderburn, some four years after his death.<sup>37</sup>

Ben was admitted to the Naseby Hospital on 26 May 1898 for a hernia operation. His admission record states that he was single, 53 years of age, employed as a gardener and resided at Wedderburn. He was discharged 104 days later, on 7 September 1898 and the fee was 30/- per week. This was an unusually long time for a hernia operation suggesting there may have been complications or other problems.

Ben was elected a member of the Wedderburn School Committee on 1 December 1899 to fill a vacancy. He served on the committee until April 1901.

In Ben's letter of 12 August 1875, he mentions some gold found "*from the river just below here*". He seems to have maintained an interest in gold prospecting although it is not known if this was more than just a spare time activity. In May 1900, Ben applied for a licence to build a water race two miles long with six heads from Wedderburn Creek.<sup>38</sup> A licence for two heads of water was granted 29 May

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33 Obituary in the Mt Ida Chronicle, 9 August 1912.

34 Blackstone Hill station, Run 224, adjoining the Ida Valley station

35 Highfield station, Run 225, adjoining both Ida Valley and Blackstone Hill stations

36 Robert Pinney, *Early Northern Otago Runs* (1981), William Collins Publishers Ltd.

37 Mt. Ida Chronicle, 28 July 1916.

38 Mt Ida Chronicle, Volume 31, 25 May 1900

1900.<sup>39</sup> On 4 December 1900 he surrendered the licence (no. 452) suggesting that, for whatever reason, not a lot came of it.

On 3 September 1896 the Otago Witness reported that Ben's application for a village allotment block in Naseby District (section 14, block XI) had been successful. Five years later, on 18 September 1901, the Otago Witness reported that he had transferred (presumably sold) the block to William Wilson. Perhaps Ben had plans of living his remaining years at Naseby, but sometime around 1901-02 he became a barman at the Wedderburn Hotel which may have caused him to sell.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps the railway being opened to Wedderburn on 1st June 1900 (and bypassing Naseby) was another factor.<sup>41</sup>



**Fig. 19.** Stagecoach in front of Crown Hotel, Wedderburn, c1900.

(University of Otago Library, Hocken Collections Archive, Ref no: MS-3290/072)

On 27 July 1900 *The Mt Ida Chronicle* reports that Ben was appointed chairman of a special meeting at the Crown Hotel at Wedderburn on 19th July to farewell a local resident Robert Blair and make a presentation of a purse of sovereigns. According to the newspaper accounts he did a fine job in addressing the meeting, making the presentation and responding to the toasts.

It appears that Ben was the subject of an April Fool's prank in 1908. A handwritten leaflet dated 1 April 1908 advertised the Boxing Championship of Wedderburn between Thomas McCarthy and Ben Jeffery (who would have been 63 years old!).

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39 Mt Ida Chronicle, Volume 31, 1 June 1900

40 Ben appears in Stone's directories for Otago and South Island in 1901 as a gardener and from 1902 to 1912 as a barman at the Wedderburn Hotel.

41 Mt. Ida Chronicle, 5 October 1900.

The promoter was named as Lionel Terry, a notorious character who had murdered a ‘Chinaman’ at Wellington in 1905. He had been committed to the Seacliff Mental Hospital located less than 20 miles north of Dunedin near Palmerston and had escaped many times so would have been well known at that time. Perhaps Thomas McCarthy and Ben Jeffery had had a disagreement about something? It would surely have created a few laughs in the Wedderburn Hotel where Ben was working!<sup>42,43</sup>

Pat Shea wrote in a letter dated 10 June 1987 that the handwritten leaflet advertising the boxing match had been found in papers belonging to Harry Watts who lived around Wedderburn, served on the school committee 1916-22 and died in the 1930s. According to Pat, Harry Watts had a problem with alcohol and died penniless.<sup>44</sup> You don’t have to be a Sherlock Holmes to deduce that he must have known Ben who worked as a barman at the Wedderburn Hotel 1902-1912 and had probably served Harry Watts a drink or two!



Fig. 20.

A Very Old Identity – “Old Ben”.  
*Otago Witness*, 7 March 1906.

Could this be Ben Jeffery? We will never know, although according to an obituary he was familiarly called “Old Ben”. His general appearance would probably have been quite similar though.

42 Letter from Pat Shea of Wedderburn to Geoffrey Barber, 6 June 1987.

43 Pat Shea, *Wedderburn School and District Centennial* (1986), Central Otago News Ltd, Alexandra, page 89.

44 Pat Shea, *Wedderburn School and District Centennial* (1986), Central Otago News Ltd, Alexandra, page 75.



## Naseby

**B**EN DIED ON 26 JULY 1912 at the Naseby Hospital age 67 years. His death registration reads:<sup>45</sup>

Benjamin Jeffery d. 26.7.1912, Naseby Hospital of Cerebral Haemorrhage, age 74[sic] years, Rabbiter. Parents unknown. Born Tunbridge Wells, England. Resident N.Z. 45 years. Unmarried. John Parker and Charles Dixon, householders, registered the death. Thomas Mitchell, Undertaker, Naseby.

He was buried in Naseby cemetery on 28 July 1912 in Block III, Section H, plot 18 (Figs. 21, 22 & 23).<sup>46</sup> The following obituary appeared in *The Mt. Ida Chronicle*, the local weekly newspaper, on 2 August 1912 under the Wedderburn News section:

It is my sad duty to chronicle the death of an old resident, Mr. Benjamin Jeffery which took place Friday 26th (July) in Naseby Hospital. “Old Ben” as he was familiarly called, was a landmark about Wedderburn, having resided here for the past 30 years. In the early days he was a gardener for Sir Francis Dillon Bell of Shag Valley Station. He was buried in Naseby cemetery on Sunday 28th, and although it was a raw cold day a large number journeyed to Naseby to follow his remains to their last resting place.

Also, in *The Mt Ida Chronicle*, on 9 August 1912:

A correspondent writes: The late Benjamin Jeffery, of Wedderburn, was an old resident of the colony. From 1874 to 1882 he was in the employ



**Fig. 21.** Naseby cemetery showing the location of Ben’s grave.

<sup>45</sup> Deaths in District of Naseby, Quarter Ending 30 September 1912, Registration No: 1912/7034.

<sup>46</sup> Naseby cemetery records, email correspondence from Wendy Mulholland, 7 Jan 2019.

No record has been found of Ben being a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral, but perhaps he did sing in his local church and maybe even visited and sang at St Paul's at one time. Four years later, the following notice appeared in the *Mt Ida Chronicle* on 28 July 1916:

I am this day removing the domicile lately occupied by the late Ben Jeffery and situated near Wedderburn Creek.

non-land	Doncane	Jones	mayes	11	11	11
Smith	17	15	9	9	9	9
Netch	Jeffrey	McAvoy	Sperry	See car	See car	See car
Light	18	14	10	6	6	6
Matt	Marion	Parker	Clark	11	11	11
	9	15	11	11	11	11
Scott	Wadde	16	12	12	12	12
11	20	11	12	12	12	12

**Fig. 22.** Naseby cemetery. Ben's grave is plot 18 (Block III, Section H). (Source: Naseby cemetery website under development.)



## Conclusion

BEN'S FATHER, WILLIAM, died at Little Horsted in Sussex in 1880 aged 69 years. Shortly after this, both Martha's and Charles' family moved from Little Horsted to Uckfield, a larger town a few miles away, taking their mother Harriet with them. Harriet died there in 1883, aged 71 years, and her bible and Ben Jeffery's surviving letters were then passed down through Martha's family to the author.

In one letter Ben complained about receiving little mail from home. He states in his last letter in 1875 that he also has been "*so long in wrighting*". It must have become difficult for both sides to maintain contact and there had probably been a gap of many years before Martha's appeal in the Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper in 1890. Martha would almost certainly have written to Ben to inform him of his mother's death in 1883 and if she did, it would appear she received no response. It is almost certain that Ben's dispute with Johanne Luks in 1879 played a part in this as he would have been forced to leave his cottage at the Waihemo Hotel at the end of his lease, the last address known to Martha.

Ben enjoyed the excitement of moving to New Zealand and the higher standard of living which came from better wages and the ability to earn extra through his own endeavours. He worked hard and we know from his letters and the court case of 1879 that he not only worked for the Bell family at Shag Valley station but, at various times in the 1870s at least, he bought and sold horses in his spare time and leased a garden/orchard from which he sold the produce. After his move to Wedderburn about 1883/84 he became involved in the community through his work as postmaster and on the Wedderburn school committee. The last decade of his life was spent as a barman at the Wedderburn (Crown) Hotel which would have suited him in the final years of his life as it was probably less physically demanding and would have provided the social contact which would have otherwise been difficult for an unmarried man in a remote location such as Wedderburn. His obituary shows that he had made many friends.

Ben's letters have kept his memory alive. He was one of more than 100,000 assisted and nominated immigrants who arrived in New Zealand between 1871 and 1880. A recession in 1879 led to less liberal provisions regarding passage but Otago province had received some 27,000 immigrants under these schemes, more than any other province.

## *Postscripts*

The influence Ben's letters had on his family in England is perhaps his greatest legacy. According to Ben's letters, his brother Charles' and sister Martha's did consider emigrating: Charles to the USA and Martha to New Zealand. While neither left England, several of their children did, probably influenced by stories of "Uncle Ben".

### **Percy Jeffery**

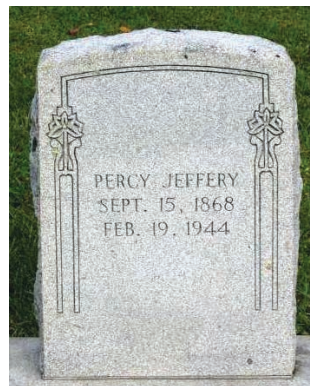
Ben writes affectionately of his nephew Percy, who would have been almost 4 years old when Ben departed for New Zealand. Percy was to follow Ben's example and emigrated to the USA in 1902 at age 33 years, his occupation, like Ben, a gardener. He was joined by his sister Kate sometime after her husband died in 1937. Kate had married late in life and appears to have had no children. Percy remained single until 1938 when, at the age of 69 years, he married the widow Irma Tomlinson (nee Whitesell) but they divorced just two years later. Kate witnessed Percy's death in 1944 and he is buried at Troutville cemetery in Virginia (Fig. 24). Kate died in 1951 and is also buried there. There is no gravestone for Kate, but it is possible that she was buried in the same grave as her brother. She would have been the last of the family there.

Percy and Kate were the only children of Ben's brother Alfred who lived at Rusthall near Tunbridge Wells in Kent. Alfred worked as a hay trusser up until the 1890s and then as a cab proprietor. His first wife, Mary Ann Holmwood, died in 1882 and he remarried Mary Baker in 1885. Alfred died in 1920 and his estate was valued at £444.

### **Martha Morris (née Jeffery)**

Ben's sister Martha had married Silas Morris in 1869 and had two sons, Ernest and William, before Ben left for New Zealand in 1872. Ben writes "*remember me to ...all the little Children espesially Percy, Willy and Ernest because they know me*".

Martha and Silas considered joining Ben as he writes in 1873: *Dear Mother you said Sie and Martha wanted to come to New Zealand now I am certain that it is the best thing that ever I did in my life but there are grate draw-backs for married people with young families I do not say this to hinder them but it is my duty to be honest with those*



**Fig. 24.** Percy Jeffery's gravestone at Troutville cemetery, Botetourt County, Virginia. (Photo: John Shuck, [www.findagrave.com/Memorial/46075767](http://www.findagrave.com/Memorial/46075767))

*that are near and dear to me now that there is a plenty of work is certain for a good steady man but there is not always a place for his famy [family] where he works they must live in a tent or stop in some town and house rent is very dear in the towns but I will write to Martha next mail and if they do really wish to come I will make the arrangement for them*

Maybe this discouraged them as they stayed in England and lived at Little Horsted in Sussex until about 1880 and then moved to Alchorne's cottages in the nearby town of Uckfield after the death of Martha's father, taking their widow mother Harriet with them. They had seven children and postcards surviving from her daughters indicate that Martha was a much-loved mother. She was also concerned enough about Ben to place the "Missing Friends" notice in the Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper in 1890. Martha died in 1922 and is buried at Lewes in Sussex.

Two of Martha's children, Silas Morris and Kathleen Martha Morris, emigrated to the USA in 1911 and 1913 respectively. Silas' future wife, Lilian Ralph, travelled with Kathleen suggesting she and Silas knew each other in England. However, they were to have no children. Descendants of Kathleen survive in the USA today and DNA matching has recently led to contact with Kathleen's granddaughter and family.

### **Charles Jeffery**

Ben's brother Charles was a carpenter's labourer in 1871, then a carpenter journeyman in 1881 and in 1901 a builder (employer) according to the UK census records. He married Emma Sapp in 1864 and they and their six children lived at Little Horsted, close to his parents. He is noted as being present at the death of his father William Jeffery on 8 January 1880 at Little Horsted. Like Martha's family, they appear to have moved to Uckfield about 1880. His wife Emma was noted as being present at Harriet Jeffery's death on 29 March 1883 at Uckfield. Charles died there in 1905 and his estate was valued at £555.

Charles considered emigrating to the USA as Ben wrote to his mother in 1872: *tell me all about Charly when you write if he is going to America*. However, he decided against it and settled in to learning his trade as a carpenter. Ben wrote again in 1875: *tel Charly I will write to him next mail I hope he gets plenty of work all Building Trades are good in Otago there is a Carpenter working hear he gets twelve shillings per day of 8 hours and his food and lodging house rent is very dear in Dunedin twelve bob a week for a small cottage*. But Charles wasn't tempted and made a success of himself in England starting out as a carpenter's labourer and ending up as a builder (employer).

Details of the Jeffery family tree are given in Appendix III.





## APPENDIX I

# The Old Coaching Days

*Otago Daily Times*, Issue 20087, 2 May 1927

### THE OLD COACHING DAYS

#### INTERESTING REMINISCENCES.

Written for *The Otago Daily Times* by Murray Thomson.

The journey to Clyde to-day is made so easy by the present mode of transit, that one forgets the inconvenience that the traveller had to endure before the advent of the railway and the luxurious motor car. Fifty-one years ago, when I made my first trip to Clyde, passengers and mails were carried by the old and well-known firm of Cobb and Co., whose well-built coaches, good teams of horses, and experienced drivers carried thousands of passengers in safety to all parts of the province. Cobb's headquarters were in Stafford street, in a big yard right opposite the present site of Kempthorne, Prosser's warehouse. The stables were extensive and well built, including harness rooms, lofts for food, and large sheds for housing the coaches. Her© also was a shoeing forge where men were busy making shoes and shoeing horses, spare horses and coaches being required to be ready at any moment to take the road. Then there was a well-conducted coach factory, where the coaches were built and repaired. Upstairs, facing Stafford street, was a large paint shop, at the back of which Was the trimming shop, where were mad© all the curtains, cushions, leather springs, and harness; here also was the repair shop. Though the staff was not large—some 20 all told —yet a great amount of work was put through, and at one time a good deal of work connected with fire brigades in different parts of New Zealand was done. In all branches the best of material was used, the timber, oak, ash, and hickory being imported direct from America. The work having to be as light as possible all the workmen had to be and were the best body makers, wheelwrights, coach smiths, etc., that were to be obtained. The booking office from which the coaches started was at first situated at the south corner of Stafford and Princes street, afterwards fox a time at the old Empire Hotel (now the Grand), and finally in the old Commercial Bank, next to Wain's Hotel, in Manse street.

From here, coaches left every morning for north and south connecting with other coaches which ran to different parts of the province. Passengers could book their passage right through to Invercargill or Christchurch. A staff of grooms under a competent manager saw that all coaches and teams left the yard in good running order. It was from the latter starting point, Manse street, that the writer in the last week of December 1875, found himself, along with about 20 others, waiting to get on board the north coach, which, punctually at 6.30 a.m., appeared round the corner of Stafford street, in charge of that famous whip, "Ned" Devine. In a remarkably short time the staff, under the direction of William Pitman ("Billy") had all the mails, papers, parcels, etc., stowed away. At 7 a.m. Sharp all was ready. The passengers were seated; the grooms held the horses' heads. "Let them go," shouted Ned. The grooms stepped aside, and away went the six greys in grand style, around the corner into High street, and down into Princes street. It was a bright morning, and the coach, with its well-groomed horses, polished harness, and crowd of passengers was a sight as it passed down Princes street and George street. It pulled up at McGavin's White Horse Hotel to pick up more passengers, among whom were Sir Dillon and Lady Bell and their son, who were returning to their home at Coal Creek, Waihemo. Leaving here we turned into King street at a four speed, then down the North-East Valley, and up to the Junction Hotel, where a man waited with buckets of water for the panting horses. We then trotted along a fine length of road that would be hard to beat in any part of New Zealand. The great pine trees in the virgin bush towered over our heads, making a sight not easily forgotten. This passed, we found ourselves driving down the hill to Blueskin. As only a master whip could, Ned, without easing his speed, guided his team round the big bend at the water troughs. At the old Blueskin Hotel we pulled up. Here Ned Russell, groom in charge, waited with a team of fresh horses. In a few minutes Devine's voice rang out, "All aboard! Let them go," and we were off on our second stage to Waikouaiti. Our fresh horses, a fine chestnut team, soon settled down to work, and went bowling at a great rate round the head of Blueskin Bay, passing Evansdale en route. Kilmog Hill was next climbed, and then we were off at a good rattle down the other side to Merton. Pulling up at Brunton's accommodation house we picked up another passenger. At 10 o'clock we pulled up at Waikouaiti and were soon breakfasting at the Golden Fleece Hotel. After a brief but enjoyable repast provided by host James, "All aboard!" hurried us from the table, and with another fresh team of six horses we were soon off on our third stage of nine miles to Palmerston.

The day was bright, and the stage was a most enjoyable one. At every farm all hands turned out to see the coach and to give a friendly wave as we hurried past. Some waited by the roadside to pick up the Otago Daily Times, thrown from the coach as we hurried along. Flag Swamp and Pleasant Valley were left behind, and we soon found ourselves running into Palmerston to Gilligam's North-western Hotel. Being holiday time quite a crowd of people were awaiting our arrival, some to meet friends and all to pick up the morning paper. Palmerston before the advent of the railway was quite a busy place, being the chief town of the Waihemo. County. There the farmers of the surrounding district did all their marketing, and on this particular day there was quite a gathering of horses and riders, single and double buggies, dog carts and spring carts. These were scattered through the township, giving the place a very busy appearance. Several wagoners were making this a halting place by the way and refreshing their 10-horse teams. Here we parted with our coach. Two smaller ones were in waiting, one bound for Oamaru and the other for Clyde. After the horses were taken out, the different drivers' assistants, helped by some of the passengers, transferred the mails, papers, and luggage to the smaller coaches. In less than half an hour all was ready. Most of the passengers got into the Oamaru coach, which was driven by Jimmy Duncan. Ned Devine, with the smaller coach and a four-horse team, again started off with us on our next stage to Waihemo, a rather long stage of 18 miles. Soon the country had taken on a very changed appearance. The hills were brown and bare, the landscape being relieved just here and there with the green of the few patches under cultivation. The drive-up Shag Valley was most interesting. After the first fording of the river at the Grange we made a gradual ascent, passing first the Black Pinch and then the sailor's Cutting, this latter being so called from the number of runaway sailors who found employment there during the rush to the diggings. We were soon on the flat on the other side. Here the Shag River made a big bend, and we had to ford it twice in a distance, of about 400 yards. In this bend between the two fords was the Two Rivers Hotel, built by a man called Dean. A short distance further on Ned pulled up at the gate of the Coal Creek Station, where we bade good-bye to our fellow-passengers, Sir Dillon and Lady Bell and son. The horses were whipped up, and in a few minutes, Ned pulled up at the Waihemo Hotel, a building constructed of stone from Green Valley, in the neighbourhood. After doing justice to a very fine dinner provided by the proprietor, Mr Luke [Luks], we were invited into an adjoining orchard, belonging to our host, and helped ourselves to as much of the luscious fruit as we could eat. The now familiar call from Ned made us hurry for the coach, and with another fresh team we were soon off on the last stage for the day, a

distance of 12 miles, with Pigroot at the end of it. Although this was the roughest stage of the journey, there being little level road, all was very interesting.

After passing Morrison's old accommodation house we gradually ascended the Brothers Hill, a height of 1700ft. A down-hill grade for a few miles brought us in sight of the Pigroot. Here we all jumped out and enjoyed the luxury of stretching our legs, after the long-cramped position in the coach. On this stage we passed several road wagons drawn by their eight or 10-horse teams, toiling along on their wearisome way. It was no uncommon thing for a wagon to be bogged in the mud on the roads, or stuck up on a hillside, which had proved too much for the tired team, so for mutual safety they travelled in pairs, double banking, as the wagoner said, when necessary. The coach was the boss of the road, and it was good to see the wagoners hurriedly drawing aside to let it pass. Cheery words were exchanged between drivers and passengers, and soon the heavy lumbering wagons were lost' in the distance. The old road wagoners were on the whole a fine, hospitable type of man. Many a weary, footsore traveller had cause to thank a sympathetic wagoner for a lift on his long journey and a night's hospitality by a cheery campfire. Only men with big hearts and plenty of pluck would undertake to pilot in all sorts of weather these heavily laden, cumbrous, old structures over the boggy, unmetalled roads they had to traverse. These heroes of the road never failed to make their journey. Their remuneration was not great; they carried about four tons, for which they got anything from £8 a ton, but at the time of the Dunstan rush as high as £100 a ton was paid. At Pigroot, the hotel, a low one-storeyed building, stood in solitary grandeur beside a prattling stream in a picturesque valley among the mountains. Hundreds of travellers from Dunedin to up-country townships must remember with gratitude the good fare and comfortable accommodation provided by their good hosts, Mr and Mrs Freeland. Often their accommodation was taxed to the full, but they always managed to bed and sup all that came along. In those days the Pigroot was a busy halting place. Sometimes the number of wagoners camped roundabout made the place look like a veritable canvas town. The arrival of the gold escort, with perhaps thousands of ounces of gold, always created some excitement. The gold was in cast-iron boxes fastened under the centre seat of the coach. The escort troopers kept guard all night, using the front veranda of the hotel as a sentry box.

While we were loitering round, waiting for dinner, the down coach rattled in. The reins were in the capable hands of a noted driver—Henry Albert Nettlefold, known



as "Harry." To-day one does not think of Ned Devine without recalling Harry Nettlefold. On this occasion Harry had a full coach of merry travellers, most of whom were light-hearted diggers with well-filled purses of gold. They were on their way to Dunedin to enjoy the Caledonian Games and other New Year festivities, and, incidentally, to empty their purses, when they would return once more to draw from mother earth their hard-won gold. The dinner bell rang, and soon all were seated at the well-filled board. Ned Devine sat at the head, and this being the festive season of the year, Mrs Freeland had provided a fat roast turkey, which Ned carved in a most masterly style. We were entertained by jokes and stories from the two drivers, and by the talk of the light-hearted diggers, who, no doubt, had had a very satisfactory Christmas washup. We were loath to leave such jovial company, but as our coach started at an early hour in the morning most of the passengers went off to bed, but none to sleep. The walls were thin, and the continual chatter kept us awake till the small hours of the morning. We were up at 5 o'clock, and after a hurried wash and a hasty cup of coffee, we hurried out and found Harry Nettlefold already in the driving seat, and the horses eager to get away. Harry's "All aboard," hurried us on, and with a hearty good-bye to Ned Devine we were away on our first stage for the day, a distance of 12 miles to the Kyeburn. The morning air was bracing, our horses were fresh, and we made good time up the Pigroot hill. We soon topped the large ridge of the watershed of the Shag and the Taieri River. ' Here Nettlefold pointed out a long length of wooden fluming which he explained was part of a scheme that failed to bring down water from the head of the Shag to the deep sinking at Hyde. A miscalculation was made in taking the levels, and the scheme was abandoned, the wooden fluming remaining as a monument to somebody's mistake. As we descended, a fine panorama of the Maniototo gradually unfolded before us, with Rough Ridge and Rugged Ridge away in the distance. The morning sun was gradually dispersing the fog from the hills, the whole making a very fine sight indeed. After crossing the Swineburn we ran along a pretty length of level road which brought us to the Kyeburn River. The water reached no higher than the horses' knees, and we had no difficulty in crossing. We pulled up at Malloch's Kyeburn Hotel, where we again changed horses, then set off for Naseby, a distance of 15 miles. Here we had barely time to view the wonderful terrace of waterworn sand or gravel on the right bank of the river when the old familiar call "All aboard" made us hurry for our seats on the coach. The road now turned to the north, following a long ridge covered with silver tussock. On this stage we met only one human being, a horseman up from Scobie Mackenzie's Kyeburn Station, who was waiting for the mailbag and other packages.

We exchanged the season's greetings, and with breakfast in view at Naseby, we sped on through monotonous tussock country, with the grand mountain scenery in the distance. The eye could easily follow the Kyeburn River right up to the gorge, some six or seven miles distant, with Mt. Kyeburn 5500 ft high towering above, while the Mount Ida Range ran away to the right above Naseby. Further away to the left rose the Rock and Pillar and other high lands. It is 51 years since I viewed this sight, and I can still recall it, so great was the impression it made on me. Home Gully was crossed, and we were soon on the top of the hill above Naseby. We wound down the road, and the town lay at our feet looking very inviting in the warm sunshine.

Running up the main street, we turned in at Ned Oswell's Royal Hotel, where our appetites, sharpened by our early ride, did full justice to the royal breakfast which awaited us. Breakfast finished, we wandered up and down the main street, the most striking feature of which was the large number of hotels that seemed to carry on a profitable business. Naseby was at this time a thriving mining town. Many thousands of ounces of gold were won from the surrounding claims, perhaps the most noted being the Buster claim, 3000 ft up on Mount Ida Range, and the Dead Level Company's claim on the same level as the township. On returning to the hotel, we found Nettlefold on the box, gathering in the reins of his four fresh horses and ready for the start. We were soon seated, and with friendly wave of hands from the onlookers, we set off on our seventh stage to Hill's Creek. We had a fine run over the Maniototo Plains, extending several miles to the hills on our left, while the Mount Ida Range lay close on our right. On this part of the journey Nettlefold was in a talkative mood. He pointed out all the places of interest and told tough yarns of his own past adventures in this part of the country.

We pulled up at Woodney's Eden Creek Hotel, where, after horse and man had been refreshed, we trotted down to the Eweburn Crossing, climbed up to the neck of the Rough Ridge, and then down again to the head of the Ida Valley, where we pulled up at Drysdale's for a few minutes' spell. At Inder's Hill's Creek Hotel, at the top of the next ridge, horses were again changed, and the road led down a gentle slope to the Manuherikia Valley, passing Holland's station on the left. At our first fording of the Manuherikia the river was much swollen owing to the melting of the snow on the hills, but without a moment's hesitation, our Jehu put his horses to the ford, and although we shipped a little water where the shingle had been scooped out by the force of the stream, we reached the far side without mishap. A pleasant run

down the valley, with the Dunstan Range on our right and the Blackstone Hill on our left, brought us to Beck's, where we pulled up at the White House Hotel. Here we sat down to a well-remembered dinner of roast lamb Harry had addressed as the representative good-bye to two of our fellow passengers who were bound for the Drybread diggings, one of them having an interest in the Blue Duck sluicing claim. Drybread was named by a Finn, who complained that the diggings were so poor that he made only "dry bread" out of it. Starting with another fresh team, Becks was soon far behind, and after crossing the Manuherikia for a second time we reached Blacks. While the horses were emptying their buckets, we were all interested in a heated argument between our coachman and a short dark man that Harry had addressed as the representative of the Bank of New Zealand. It was evident that Harry was getting the worst of it, so using the advantage at hand, he whipped up his horses and postponed the argument for another day. Another passenger had joined us at Blacks, Mr James Tyrrell, master plumber, of Clyde, who had been fitting up in one of the residences a bath, a great luxury in these days. After fording the Manuherikia for the third time, we travelled over some rough country, where we saw for the first time our now ever present "bunny." I now recall that the majority of these rabbits were not grey coloured as new but were brownish and ginger coloured. We were now working down the river valley, the river being away on our left. At Chatto Creek we pulled up for our last change of horses. The road from Chatto Creek to Clyde was in good condition. Nettlefold and Tyrrell pointed out and named the surrounding hills and mountains and vied with each other in telling tales of hardships endured by drivers and passengers in the rush for gold in the early days. Here also we were shown the crossing of the Manuherikia at Campbell's station, where the old Rock and Pillar road emerged from the hills. In the early days this was the regular road for wagons and coaches. From Dunedin, it passed through Outram and passed over Maungatua and the shoulder of the Rock and Pillar. The road was a short cut but being very rough it was abandoned when the Dunedin-Palmerston road was opened. The end of our journey was now in sight—Clyde at last. We pulled up at Hawthorn's Hotel at 7 o'clock, and the landlord met us in person. Nettlefold and our two remaining fellow passengers were taking up quarters at another hotel, so we said good-bye, and were soon enjoying a very welcome tea, served in good style by the lady of the house.

Thus ended our never-to-be-forgotten trip. In spite of minor discomforts, we enjoyed every part of the way. The journey covered two long days. The roads, though dry, were full of ruts, over which the coach rattled and bumped along—yes, bumped so

badly sometimes that one had to hold on to the seat to save his head from being brought into contact with the roof of the coach. Horses were changed ten times, 46 horses in all being used to do the trip. Fifty-one years is a long time to look back, and I trust that any slips of memory will be overlooked, and that my humble attempt to recall the good old coaching days in Otago will be read with some interest by others who, like myself, still remember with delight the genial drivers who, in all seasons of the year, over the worst of roads and through swollen, treacherous rivers, carried their human freight, mails, etc., safely, though sometimes very late, to the desired haven. Reverently I raise my hat to those daring coach drivers and wagon drivers who may still be with us and wish them a happy and easy end to their long journey.

## APPENDIX II

# Description of the Waihemo Hotel in 1874

*Bruce Herald*, Volume VI, Issue 571, 13 February 1874

### WAIHEMO HOTEL

Description of the Waihemo Hotel When it was Owned by Mr J.B.L. Luks.  
By Our Traveller. Waihemo.

The Waihemo Hotel is built of stone and is the property of Mr J. B. L. Luks, situated on the main Dunstan Road, 17 miles from Palmerston and 35 miles from Mount Ida. The hotel has the following accommodation: - Six bedrooms containing twelve beds; dining-room; kitchen; domestic bedrooms, etc. The kitchen is a fine commodious establishment, having every requisite for carrying on that department, everything being scrupulously clean.

Outside the back door of the house is the dairy, whose well-filled shelves and richly covered milk-pans attest the nature of the Waihemo pastures; here, as in the kitchen, everything is spotless. To the right of the door is the bakery, having a large brick oven, sponge- tubs, and the other requirements of this most essential and economic department. Returning to the main part of the house, we have the comfortable private family apartments of Mr Luks, which I find I have omitted to mention. General Store and Post-office: This comprises a little of everything together, with a good stock of oats and chaff. The Post-office is also kept by the proprietor of the Waihemo Hotel. Mr Luks has erected a small home just opposite his hotel, for the accommodation of carriers and swagmen, where they can swing their billies in comfort and peace on their own account.

A butchery establishment is also maintained. The Livery and Bait Stables are adjoining the hotel and have stalls for six horses. A chaff- cutter is worked by a belt from the main pulley of the waterwheel just outside the gable of the stable loft, and the machine shop stands in contiguity to it. There are ample piggeries and fowl houses, containing plenty of both stocks. The stack-yard contains a large rick of



meadow hay; while next to it is the stockyard, and gallows for killing beef. Here too is a small kitchen garden.

The Garden covers five acres of ground and is situated on the south side of the hill which rises at the back of the hotel. The garden contains some very beautiful flowers, of which a bed of variegated verbenas is perhaps as rare in color and shade as could be found anywhere. On the right, a little beyond the entrance to the garden, is a fountain, whose gravelly basin contains the beautiful goldfish, flashing out in the summer morning sunshine. A little removed is a beautiful weeping willow with a long straight stem. A seat beneath the spreading branches of the black Tasmanian wattle invites a cool retreat in the hot noon. At the end of the walk which bounds the south side of the Garden is a summerhouse, supplied with rustic table and seats, while on every side are luxuriant fruits, in apple, plum, cherry, strawberry, gooseberry, currant, etc. The hazel also grows here, while a double row of scotch firs, and red spruce, and silver firs, are fixing their roots into their adopted soil, and are set along the northern side to form a windbreak to the larch and other trees, amongst which is the Turkish oak, black walnut, etc. The blue gums do their usual office of outer guardian, to protect from the severity of the north winds the brilliant clusters of the red currant and other fruits and shelter those shrubs and trees which grow at their feet.

The orchard is loaded with all kinds of the already-named fruits, together with raspberries, black currants, etc. On the southern side the fence is trellised to a height of 15 ft. and backed by a living wall of willows and gums. Here the magnificent passionflower climbs into their branches and weaves its flora with sweet pink tea rose and the green foliage of the willow. The yellow rose-tinted gourd of the passionflower hangs pendent, looking like a luscious treat. Close by is the scented verbena and the white moss-rose; while down the path is trained against the fence the luxuriant vine tree, whose delicious clusters rejoice the eye and will refresh the palate of some thirsty traveller by-and-bye. These are the first vines I have seen growing in the open air since last in Victoria. Mr Luks has one vine trained on the gable end of his house, which yields yearly a hundredweight of grape; beside it is a fine apricot; here also is a cabbage tree, whose root and stem is covered with ivy, which has a very pretty effect. Three very handsome double- crimson thorn trees, some 16 ft high, are tastefully distributed here.

A water-race intersects the garden about halfway up the hill and is used for irrigation purposes and to feed the waterwheel. The garden supplies the hotel with plenty of vegetables and includes a nursery also. The extent of freehold is 100 acres and is generally under cultivation. Good paddocks are in connection with the hotel, for the accommodation of horses, cattle, sheep, etc. An Australian emu stalks about the door, and has a decided predilection towards shillings, Mr Luks having detected him in swallowing the exchange for two glasses of beer, which a thirsty soul had deposited on the counter. Mr Luks certainly deserves the success he has won for his enterprise.

## APPENDIX III

# Descendants of William and Harriet Jeffery

(SSX= Sussex; SRY=Surrey; KEN=Kent; LND=London; MDX=Middlesex;  
FL=Florida; MI=Michigan; PA=Pennsylvania; NC=North Carolina; VA=Virginia;  
ON=Ontario; QC=Quebec; WA=Western Australia)

**William Jeffery**, bap. 23 Jun 1811 at Balcombe, SSX, d. 8 Jan 1880 at Little Horsted, SSX

- + **Harriet Langridge**, bap. 14 Apr 1811 at Fletching, SSX, m. 14 Nov 1835 at Fletching, SSX, d. 29 Mar 1883 at Uckfield, SSX
  - **Alfred Jeffery**, bap. 22 Jan 1837 at Fletching, SSX, d. 14 May 1920 at Tonbridge, KEN
  - + **Mary Ann Holmwood**, b. 1841 at Carshalton, SRY, m. 1866 at Tonbridge, KEN, d. 1882 at KEN
    - **Percy Jeffery**, b. 15 Sep 1868 at Speldhurst, KEN, d. 19 Feb 1944 at Troutville, VA, USA
    - + **Irma Kathleen Whitesell**, b. 16 Jul 1894 at Galveston, TX, USA, m. 26 Jan 1938 at Fincastle, VA, USA, d. 24 Jul 1972 at Troutville, VA, USA
    - **Kate Jeffery**, b. 1872 at Rusthall, KEN, d. 3 Oct 1951 at Roanoke, VA, USA
    - + **Arthur Stevens**, b. c1872 at England, m. 1916 at Eastbourne, SSX, d. 1937 at Tonbridge, KEN
  - + **Mary Baker**, b. c1845 at East Malling, KEN, m. 1885 at Tunbridge Wells, KEN, d. 1906 at Tonbridge, KEN
  - **Martha Jeffery**, b. 31 Dec 1839 at Pilt Down, SSX, d. 23 Jan 1922 at Lewes, SSX
  - + **Silas Morris**, b. 9 Jan 1849 at Uckfield, SSX, m. 12 Jun 1869 at Little Horsted, SSX, d. 11 Apr 1912 at Brighton, SSX
    - **Ernest Morris**, b. 1870 at Little Horsted, SSX
    - **William Morris**, b. 1871 at Little Horsted, SSX, d. 31 Jan 1938 at Lewes, SSX
    - + **Matilda Charlotte Wilkins**, b. 18 Aug 1877 at Croydon, SRY, m. 12 Apr 1902 at Croydon, SRY, d. 23 Feb 1946 at Lewes, SSX
      - **George William Morris**, b. 11 Apr 1903 at Culsdon, SRY, d. Mar 1976 at Lewes, SSX



+ **Jessie May Page**, b. 6 Aug 1903 at England, m. 1932 at Lewes, SSX  
— **Edith Matilda Morris**, b. 8 Jun 1907 at Lewes, SSX, d. Jun 1981  
at Lewes, SSX

+ **Robert William Eli Dawe**, b. 31 Jan 1907 at Lewes, SSX, m. 1934  
at Lewes, SSX, d. 1982 at Lewes, SSX

— **Peter R Dawe**, b. 1939 at Lewes, SSX

+ **Ann Spearing**, m. 1961 at Lewes, SSX

— **Nicholas J Dawe**, b. 1962 at Brighton, SSX

— **Sarah J Dawe**, b. 1965 at Uckfield, SSX

— **Frank Richard Morris**, b. 6 Dec 1920 at Lewes, SSX, d. 1996  
at Lewes, SSX

+ **Elizabeth Salmon**, m. 1942 at Lewes, SSX

— **Alan David Morris**, b. 30 Sep 1949 at Brighton, SSX, d. 1988  
at Lewes, SSX

+ **Jessie White**, b. 17 Nov 1922 at England, m. 1978 at Lewes, SSX,  
d. 1999 at Lewes, SSX

— **Benjamin Charles Morris**, b. 1872 at Little Horsted, SSX, d. 1896  
at Uckfield, SSX

— **Ada Morris**, b. 27 Aug 1874 at Little Horsted, SSX, d. 25 May 1963  
at Haywards Heath, SSX

+ **William Barber**, b. 16 Jan 1874 at Brighton, SSX, m. 9 Nov 1895  
at Brighton, SSX, d. 2 Nov 1952 at Brighton, SSX

— **Leslie Robert William Barber**, b. 18 Sep 1897 at Brighton, SSX,  
d. 19 Jul 1976 at Brighton, SSX

+ **Victoria May Griffiths**, b. 10 Jul 1897 at Brighton, SSX, m. 9 Oct  
1918 at Brighton, SSX, d. 23 Mar 1990 at Brighton, SSX

— **Hazel May Barber**, b. 19 Jan 1919 at Brighton, SSX, d. 1975  
at Brighton, SSX

— **Ronald Leslie Barber**, b. 9 Jun 1920 at Brighton, SSX, d. 14 Jun  
1990 at Victoria Park, WA, Australia

+ **Freda Amy Taylor**, b. 6 Sep 1922 at Brighton, SSX, m. 9 May  
1942 at Moulsecoomb, SSX, d. 13 Oct 2009 at Belmont, WA,  
Australia

— **Anthony Ronald Barber**, b. 1943 at Brighton, SSX

— **Margaret Freda Barber**, b. 1944 at Brighton, SSX

— **Geoffrey Glenn Barber**, b. 1953 at Subiaco, WA, Australia

- **Douglas Robert Barber**, b. 28 Feb 1923 at Brighton, SSX,  
d. 21 Oct 1995 at Brighton, SSX
  - **Stillborn Barber**, b. 1896 at Brighton, SSX, d. 1896 at Brighton, SSX
- **Kathleen Martha Morris**, b. 13 Apr 1876 at Little Horsted, SSX,  
d. 28 Jun 1940 at Detroit, MI, USA
  - + **Frank Sewell Ford**, b. 19 Oct 1877 at Thornton Heath, SRY, m. 25 Dec  
1899 at Lambeth, LND
    - **Frank Sewell Ford**, b. 25 Dec 1900 at Lambeth, LND, d. 22 Aug  
1995 at Wayne, MI, USA
    - + **Glenna Vivian Patch**, b. 11 Dec 1905 at Millgrove, ON, Canada,  
m. 27 Jul 1929 at Detroit, MI, USA, d. 31 Jan 1989 at Riverview,  
MI, USA
      - **Nancy Ford**, b. c1930 at MI, USA
      - + **James Leslie Jones**, b. 11 Sep 1929 at Detroit, MI, USA,  
m. 13 Sep 1952 at Detroit, MI, USA, d. 26 Feb 2004 at USA
        - **Susan Jones**, b. c1953 at USA
      - **Janet Ford**, b. c1935 at MI, USA
  - **Kathleen Marjorie Ford**, b. 14 Jun 1902 at Lambeth, LND,  
d. 10 Feb 1985 at Charlotte, NC, USA
    - + **unknown**
      - **Donna Lou Ford**, b. 27 Jul 1931 at Detroit, MI, USA
      - + **Gerald Denis Hebert**, b. 9 Nov 1931 at Windsor, ON, Canada,  
m. 18 Aug 1956 at Oakland, MI, USA, d. 18 Mar 1990 at  
Oakland, MI, USA
        - **Therese Hebert**, b. 1957 at USA
  - + **Harold Oliver Allen**, b. 29 Dec 1905 at Grey, ON, Canada, m. 17 Oct  
1934 at Detroit, MI, USA, d. 27 Dec 1984 at Pinellas, FL, USA
  - **Dorothy Blanche Ford**, b. 2 Sep 1903 at Lambeth, LND, d. 12 Oct  
1963 at Detroit, MI, USA
    - + **Kenneth S Patch**, b. 16 Mar 1908 at QC, Canada, m. 6 Sep 1930  
at Detroit, MI, USA, d. 11 Jan 1994 at Orange, FL, USA
      - **Richard K Patch**, b. c1936 at MI, USA
      - **Stuart F Patch**, b. 1940 at MI, USA
- **Harriet Eleanor Morris**, b. 1879 at Little Horsted, SSX, d. 23 Feb 1926  
at Weybridge, SRY



- **Silas Morris**, b. 4 Jul 1884 at Uckfield, SSX, d. Apr 1965 at PA, USA
- + **Lilian Elizabeth Jessie Ralph**, b. 7 Jan 1887 at Croydon, SRY,  
m. c1914 at USA, d. 27 Mar 1947 at Philadelphia, PA, USA
- **Charles Jeffery**, bap. 26 Dec 1841 at Fletching, SSX, d. 19 Mar 1905  
at Uckfield, SSX
- + **Emma Sapp**, b. c1837 at Kensington, MDX, m. 1864 at Brighton, SSX, d.  
1917 at Hailsham, SSX
- **William Charles Jeffery**, b. 1867 at Tunbridge Wells, KEN
- + **Esther Cottington Dawes**, b. 1882 at Uckfield, SSX, m. 1906  
at Uckfield, SSX, d. 19 Apr 1925 at Winchelsea, SSX
- **Kenneth William Jeffery**, b. c1908 at Tunbridge Wells, KEN
- **Francis Charles Jeffery**, b. 1910 at Heathfield, SSX, d. 8 Apr 1962  
at Strood, KEN
- + **Vera Oakley**, b. c1911, m. 1953 at Chatham, KEN
- **Annie Emma Jeffery**, b. 1868 at Tunbridge Wells, KEN
- **Caroline Jeffery**, b. 1870 at Uckfield, SSX
- **Goddard Jeffery**, b. 1873 at Little Horsted, SSX, d. 1891 at Uckfield, SSX
- **Edith Margaret Jeffery**, b. 1865 at Brighton, SSX, d. 1872 at Uckfield, SSX
- **Arthur Richard Jeffery**, b. 1871 at Little Horsted, SSX, d. 8 Aug 1942  
at West Grinstead, SSX
- + **Florence May Rice**, m. 23 Apr 1904 at Uckfield, SSX
- **Dick Rosendale Jeffery**, b. 21 Feb 1905 at Clayton, SSX, d. 22 May  
1990 at Fulking, SSX
- + **Zeffie Katherine Coley**, b. 8 Feb 1908 at Lambeth, LND, m. 3 May  
1937 at Hove, SSX, d. 2001 at Worthing, SSX
- **Benjamin Jeffery**, b. 22 Sep 1844 at Little Horsted, SSX, d. 26 Jul 1912  
at Naseby, Otago, New Zealand

## APPENDIX IV

## Census Records, England 1841-1881

Ben Jeffery was born and raised at Little Horsted, a small rural parish of approximately 300 people. The following entries were found in the 1841, 51, 61, 71 and 81 census returns for the parishes of Fletching, Little Horsted, and Uckfield in Sussex, and Tunbridge Wells in Kent.

### 1841

William Jeffery married Harriet Langridge on 14 November 1835 at Fletching, the parish in which Harriet was born. They are listed in the 1841 census as living with Harriet's parents in Fletching:<sup>47</sup>

William Langridge, 60, Agricultural labourer, born Sussex.

Martha Langridge, 65, born Sussex.

William Jeffery, 30, Agricultural labourer, born Sussex.

Harriett, 25, wife, born Sussex.

Alfred, 4, son, born Sussex.

Martha, 1, daughter, born Sussex.

The house in which they were living was Caton's (part of).

### 1851

By the time of the 1851 census, the Jeffery family had moved to William's birthplace, Little Horsted and Harriet's parents were living at the Uckfield Union Workhouse. The 1851 census for Little Horsted lists the family as:<sup>48</sup>

William Jeffery, 40, Agricultural labourer, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

Harriett, 39, wife, born Fletching, Sussex.

Alfred, 14, son, Agricultural labourer, born Fletching, Sussex.

Charles, 9, son, scholar, born Fletching, Sussex.

Benjamin, 6, son, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

Martha was staying next door:

Mary Diplock, 70, pauper, Agricultural labourer's widow, born Framfield, Sussex.

Martha Jeffery, 11, visitor, born Fletching, Sussex.

They were living at Horsted Green.

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47 The UK National Archives. 1841 Census: Class: *HO107*; Piece: *1118*; Folio: *13*; Page: *18*

48 The UK National Archives. 1851 Census: Class: *HO107*; Piece: *1640*; Folio: *370*; Page: *12*

## 1861

The 1861 census for Little Horsted lists the family as:<sup>49</sup>

William Jeffery, 50, Agricultural labourer, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

Harriett, 50, wife, born Fletching, Sussex.

Martha, 21, daughter, born Fletching, Sussex.

Benjamin, 16, son, Agricultural labourer, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

Martha married Silas Morris in 1869 at Little Horsted and they continued to live with Martha's parents.

The 1861 census for Hove (near Brighton) lists Charles Jeffery, aged 19 years, born in Little Horsted, working as a servant (footman) at 17 Brunswick St, Hove. Charles married Emma Sapp at Brighton in 1864 and their first child was born at Brighton in 1865.

In 1861, Alfred is at Rusthall, Speldhurst in Kent living with relatives:<sup>50</sup>

Daniel Aygett [Agate], 58, Farmer, born Tenbury, Kent.

Alfred Jeffery, 21, nephew, born Fletching, Sussex.

Martha Aygett, 50, wife, born Uckfield, Sussex.

Thomas Hollamby, 60, lodger, labourer, born Speldhurst, Kent.

Alfred married Mary Ann Holmwood in 1866 and lived at Rusthall for the remainder of his life.

## 1871

The 1871 census for Little Horsted lists the family as:<sup>51</sup>

William Jeffery, 60, Farm Labourer, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

Harriett, 60, Wife, born Fletching, Sussex.

Martha Morris, 30, Daughter, housekeeper, born Fletching, Sussex.

Silas Morris, 23, Son-in-law, Farm Labourer, born Uckfield, Sussex.

Elizabeth Morris, 15, Friend, born Framfield, Sussex.

Ernest Morris, 1, Grandson, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

In 1871 Charles Jeffery and wife Emma were also living in Little Horsted. The census records them as:<sup>52</sup>

Charles Jeffery, 29, Carpenter's Labourer, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

Emma Jeffery, 33, Wife, born Kensington, Middlesex.

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49 The UK National Archives. 1861 Census: Class: *RG 9*; Piece: *576*; Folio: *64*; Page: *6*

50 The UK National Archives. 1861 Census: Class: *RG 9*; Piece: *491*; Folio: *61*; Page: *41*

51 The UK National Archives. 1871 Census: Class: *RG10*; Piece: *1053*; Folio: *72*; Page: *10*

52 The UK National Archives. 1871 Census: Class: *RG10*; Piece: *1053*; Folio: *73*; Page: *11*

Edith Margret, 5, scholar, born Brighton, Sussex. [died 1872]

William Charles, 3, born Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Annie Emma, 2, born Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Caroline, 1, born Uckfield, Sussex.

Arthur Richard, 6 days, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

Sarah Cox, 40, nurse, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

In 1871 Benjamin Jeffery was living with his brother Alfred and family at Rusthall, a village in the parish of Speldhurst in Kent, about 2 miles west of Tunbridge Wells:<sup>53</sup>

Alfred Jeffery, 34, Hay trusser, born Fletching, Sussex.

Mary A, 30, wife, born Carshalton, Surrey.

Percy, 2, son, born Speldhurst, Kent.

Benjamin Jeffery, 26, Gardener, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

They were living at 4 Quarry Cottages.

## 1881

William Jeffery died at Little Horsted on 8 January 1880 aged 69 years. By the time of the 1881 census, both Charles' and Martha's families had moved to Uckfield. Harriet was living with Martha and Silas. The 1881 census lists Martha's family as living at Alchorne's cottages in New Town, Uckfield:<sup>54</sup>

Silas Morris, 33, Ag. labourer, born Uckfield, Sussex.

Martha, 41, wife, born Fletching, Sussex.

Ernest, 11, son, Scholar, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

William, 9, son, Scholar, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

Benjamin Charles, 8, son, Scholar, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

Ada, 6, Scholar, daughter, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

Martha, 4, Scholar, daughter, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

Harriett Eleanor, 1, daughter, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

Harriett Jeffery, 70, mother, widow, born Fletching, Sussex.

Charles' family is recorded as living in Church St, Uckfield:<sup>55</sup>

Charles Jeffery, 39, Carpenter Journeyman, born Fletching, Sussex.

Emma, 43, wife, born Kensington, Middlesex.

William Charles, 13, son, Office boy, born Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Annie Emma, 12, daughter, Scholar, born Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

53 The UK National Archives. 1871 Census: Class: *RG10*; Piece: *927*; Folio: *44*; Page: *38*

54 The UK National Archives. 1881 Census: Class: *RG11*; Piece: *1053*; Folio: *40*; Page: *11*

55 The UK National Archives. 1881 Census: Class: *RG11*; Piece: *1053*; Folio: *14*; Page: *22*

Caroline, 11, daughter, Scholar, born Uckfield, Sussex.

Arthur Richard, 10, son, Scholar, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

Goddard, 7, son, Scholar, born Little Horsted, Sussex.

Edwin Harman, 24, Lodger, born Barcombe, Sussex.

Their daughter Edith had died in 1872 aged 7 years.

Alfred's family is recorded as living at Percy Cottages, Speldhurst, Kent:

Alfred Jeffery, 44, Hay Trusser, born Fletching, Sussex.

Mary A. Jeffery, 40, wife, born Carshalton, Surrey.

Percy Jeffery, 12, son, Scholar, born Speldhurst, Kent.

Kate Jeffery, 9, daughter, Scholar, born Speldhurst, Kent.

Jane Holmwood, 72, widow, mother, annuitant, born Frant, Sussex.

Bessie Mathew, 17, boarder, Pupil Teacher, born London, Middlesex.

Florence Tranter, 15, boarder, Pupil Teacher, born Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire.



## APPENDIX V

# Copy of the Original Letters

## *Summary*

Ben's *first letter* (Sunday, 8 September 1872) was written aboard the Christian McAusland on the start of his voyage to New Zealand. The ship is waiting for a fair wind off Beachy Head in the English Channel. The letter contains information about the ship and his living conditions.

The *second letter* (Tuesday, 17 December 1872) is the first sent from New Zealand after his arrival at Port Chalmers (near Dunedin) on 5 December. Upon arrival all passengers were quarantined for ten days and then taken by a steamer to Dunedin. The letter is written about sixteen miles out of Dunedin where Ben is living in a tent getting ready to start work on a railway. The letter contains information on his passage from England, first impressions, working conditions and cost of living.

The *third letter* (Saturday, 8 February 1873) follows from the second. Ben did not work on the railway but instead spent a fortnight at digging ditches and is now working for a farmer for four months helping with the harvest. He has just bought a horse. The letter contains more information about the cost of living.

The *fourth letter* (Saturday, 8 November 1873) is incomplete and there have obviously been some letters before this which are missing. Ben is now working at Shag Valley Station which is owned by Sir F.D. Bell, the Speaker in the House of Representatives in Wellington. He has several men working for him in the garden and has just finished planting an orchard of one thousand fruit trees. The letter states some of the difficulties for families emigrating to New Zealand.

The *fifth letter* (date unknown) is also incomplete. This letter is to Ben's brother (Charles?) and Ben tells of his intention to breed horses for profit as he can keep them free of charge on the station.

The *sixth letter* (Thursday, 12 August 1875) has also been written from Shag Valley Station and was enclosed with a five-pound postal order for his parents. Ben is obviously prospering as he now has one hundred pounds in the bank and last year spent forty-seven pounds buying horses. He is still in charge of the garden at the station and states that the owner, Sir F.D. Bell will be going to England in the new year with one of his sons. Ben says that he has found a little gold from the river nearby and will send it to his brother Charles.

## First Letter

rigged ship of one thousand five hundred tons burden. She has been to New Zealand & times before and is a very fast sailor. She was only 80 days going last time and I am coming home. Her father please tell that that is ship next to that ship that we see at London. He and we are quite full already they are mostly very respectable lot of men some single & some are going quite alone and a good many married people with families we had many prayers on the poop at eleven o'clock to day I do not know when this will reach you for I do not know when the pilot will go ashore as we do not have any wireless message go in the note if we get a wind to take us out of the Channel

Christian Mc - Eastland

English Channel  
Sunday Sept 3<sup>rd</sup>

My dear Mother  
we are chopping about the Channel we sailed from London on Wednesday afternoon and stopped at Gravesend until Friday morning and sailed from there at day break or was rather towed by a steam tug which towed us as far as Dover that night we could not hoist any sail as the wind

was dead against us the Thames pilot left us at Deal and now we have a Channel pilot on board that will help us when we get to Plymouth he will signal a boat to take him on shore and I shall send this by him I have not got a stamp but I dare say he will put one on for me if I give him the money we are no farther than Leamington the wind being still against us it blew very hard yesterday and the sea run very high I felt rather queer in the afternoon and before I went to bed I went to the ship side made myself sick and then I was all right to day the sea is almost like a pond with very little wind we have not room to sleep in but what they call bunks they are fixtures all round the outside of the ship and our mess tables in the middle we have eight in ours we get a plenty to eat and very good food it is there is three hundred and four passengers on board and 33 seamen she is a full

which I hope we shall soon  
 get I am writing this in readiness  
 to give him in case he goes  
 to visit if we are long before  
 he leaves us I will write again  
 to some of you it is perfectly  
 on board to day the sea is quite  
 a fine my cloths that Brooker  
 bought are a very good fit  
 and my shoes fit me proper  
 I hope Dear Mother you will  
 not be in any trouble about me  
 for I am very comfortable here  
 I do not expect I shall have the  
 chance of writing again before  
 I get there for we have provisions  
 for six months on board

we shall not call any where were  
 before we get to the end of  
 journey we shall not even get  
 to send a letter by a mail as  
 we shall not stop for any thing  
 were we get a fair wind I think  
 this is all now except to ask you  
 to give my best love to all my  
 friends and remember me to all  
 the little ones and tell Dear  
 Percy not to forget to learn  
 to write to me I hope Dear Father  
 and Mother are quite well  
 and now good by Dear Mother  
 with best love from your  
 affectionate Son  
 Benjamin Jeffery



## Second Letter

now it is now the hay making and sheep shearing season the wheat and oats are just coming out in ear and fruit is just getting ripe. Dear Mother I shall be able to tell you more about things in my next I have not much time now as the mail is going out on the 14 and I have about four miles to go to post this to night it is 6 o'clock now p.m. we have been putting our tents to day we can have a pound of meat at the every meat a day for about ten shillings per week we shall begin work at eight o'clock in the morning and have an hour at twelve and leave off at five so I shall have more time when we get settled down.

East Taieri 1872  
December 17<sup>th</sup>

My Dear Mother this is the greatest pleasure I have ever felt in writing to you and I sincerely hope that you are all doing well. I hope Dear Father and Martha and all are quite well I am writing in a tent we are all in tents we had a splendorous passage out we was only two days coming but we had to go into quarantine for ten days because a little child had the scarlet fever but there was not a single man that had any thing the matter with him Dear Mother we have not began work yet but we

are going to begin to morrow morning we are going to have eight hours for work per day that is all they in the colony and the wages will be eight shillings per day which is more than ever I should have in England we came into port Chalmers on the 5<sup>th</sup> and was put ashore on a little Island because we should not carry the fever into the town and they took us away yesterday by steamer to Dunedin and from there about 10 miles up the country we have been found in provisions up till to day but to day we have to pray for our own there is five of us in our tent and we all mess together the beef is 3s per lb.

and seven pence for a fourth lb of sugar & butter our bill for three days five of us came to 1s 2s 6 but we had to buy some things to cook in a fry pan and drum to make tea in and drink in cups came to eight and six pence so the food only cost 1s shillings we can buy a whole sheep for 3s 6 and a barge one to use have no lodgings to pay as they find our tents we are not obliged to work on the railway but that is a good thing for a start without looking for work and is not many hours per day it is a rally between to mountain that we are going to work in the Country is very hilly all I have



there is two Mails a month from  
Dunedin Dear Mother when you  
write direct my letters to the  
General post office Dunedin  
Otago New Zealand till called for  
as I do not know what port we shall  
be when it comes and I can write  
to the post office for them  
if I am not near enough to go  
for them it is near Christmas  
now and it is like June at home  
I hope you will all have a merry  
Christmas and a happy new year  
there is a little Church about a  
mile from our tents I shall be  
so glad to church again for we have  
not had any service for some time  
Dear Mother I have not told you  
that I am quite well and happy  
and I hope it may please God

that you are all the same all my  
messmates come from Sussex  
three from Brighton and one  
from Mayfield I must conclude  
now for the present for I want  
to scratch a few lines to off and  
on and it is getting late so with  
my kindest love to all remain  
your loving son Benjamin  
Jeffery  
tell me all about Chas  
when you write if he is going  
to America

Address

Benjamin Jeffery  
General post office  
Dunedin Otago  
New Zealand to be called for

## Third Letter

a grate part of the work is let  
out by the yard to the men at  
8<sup>th</sup> per yard and now I must tell  
you that I have bought a horse  
to ride any where that I want  
to go I get my amount of riding  
after stock but of course I ride  
a horse of the Masters at my  
work but almost every one here  
has a horse of his own he is 2 years  
old and I gave eight pounds  
ten shillings for him being the  
only money I have spent of all  
I have earned here for a man  
will not be long saving  
fifty pounds here if he  
does not drink but if he does  
he will never have any thing  
for drink is very dear here every  
thing is 6 per gall and you

St. John Feb 8/1875

My Dear Mother and Father  
I sincerely hope this will find  
you all at home as well and  
comfortable as I am my self  
I am not far from where I was  
when I wrote before I am not  
at work on the railway nor have  
I been at all I worked a fortnight  
at ditching when I first came  
at 8 shillings per day of 8 hours  
and then agreed with a farmer  
to work for 4 months for thirty  
shillings per week and every thing  
found men that come on for the  
harvest get from two pound to  
~~thirty shillings~~ fifty shillings

per week have their food but  
that only last for 5 or 6 weeks  
we all have our food together  
Master Man and all the same  
and live as only a very poor  
house hold to live in in England  
we work very hard at the harvest  
but we only work 8 hours a day  
the same as any thing else it  
is all cut by machine but I have  
never seen near so heavy crops at  
home some wheat yielding from  
40 to 80 bushels per acre Dear Mother  
I must tell you that I have not had to  
pay any of my Passage Money yet nor  
do I expect I ever shall for Master  
Brogden's agents told us when  
we saw them that we must

go where we liked we have  
never been asked for our papers  
or any thing we where landed  
on the jetty and left to go where  
we liked and my ship mates are  
all scattered about the Colony  
it is to populate the Colony  
that they are bringing people  
out here Brogden is paid by  
the Colonial Government  
to bring out people and he  
does not care about keeping them  
on the railway for a grate  
many of them would not  
earn him a shilling per day  
and those that do work on the  
railway get 8 shillings a day  
and have no money stopped at all  
they do not know who came out  
under Brogden at all



do not get a bottle full of spirits for 6 and a common beer glass of beer the same price  
 Dear Mother this is a very windy Country with a great deal of rain in the winter season it is very hot now but it is not like the weather at home one day may be burning hot and the next morning the tops of the mountains covered with snow but it never stays all day even in winter they say there is some days as hot as summer but still it is very healthy, I wish I had brought out a good set of seeds with me for flowers and vegetables are very scarce here we are nearly nine miles

from a post office and I must ride over to get some stamps but there are four Coaches pass about a mile from every day I could send them to post by one of them only I have not the stamps and the do not care to be bothered putting them on I think  
 Dear Mother this is all this time please remember me to all dear Family at home and all except the Sincere Affection of your  
 Loving Son

Ben Jeffery

P.S. address the same as before

## Fourth Letter

in my life but there are grate  
draw-backs for married people  
with small families I do not say  
this to <sup>young</sup> think them but it is  
my duty to be honest with those  
that are near and dear to me now  
that there is a plenty of work  
is certain for a good steady man  
but there is not always a place  
for his family where he works  
they must live in a hut or shop  
in some town and house rent  
very dear in the towns but  
I will write to Martha next  
month and if they do really wish  
to come I will make the arrange-  
ment for them as I am rather  
up to the arrangement

Shag Valley Waltham  
Nov 8<sup>th</sup> 73  
My Dear Mother and Father  
I have been rather long in  
writing this time but I have  
been waiting for letters from  
home I received 3 a week  
ago from you and Charles and  
Wm baker of Tun Wells  
but I hope Dear Parents  
this will find you all in  
good health I am quite well  
my self I am still at the  
same place there are a

grate many men working here I have 10 always with me  
in the garden and some times more I have only to say that  
I want so many men and they are there we shall have a  
good place here in a little time I have made a new  
orchard this spring I had 12 men trenching for a good  
while I have planted a thousand fruit trees I never saw  
my people until I had been here three minutes as they  
were away at Wiltshire for L. D. Bell is the speaker  
in the house of Representatives so I had all my work to  
do by fairs and letter but I am pleased to be able to  
tell you that I gave them the best satisfaction I like  
him very much but I do not like the lady quite so much  
but I do not care about her as I have my way in every  
thing Dear Mother you said Sic and Martha wanted to  
come to me I believe now I am certain that it is the  
best thing that ever I did.



## Fifth Letter

of my one it is kept by  
the Station and I have the  
chance to keep as many  
as I like free of cost  
I intend to buy a mare  
or to and breed from the  
the foals will grow into  
money in a year or to  
withstand much trouble  
I am sending two papers  
by this and I have sent  
one by nearly every mail  
for a good while but if you  
do not get them better  
than I do it is not much  
good for I have only

received 3 since I have  
been in the country  
I have not got any since  
I have been hear Mother  
ask me to put my address  
I will write again next  
mail to some of you  
I hope all good men are good  
well and my little Percy  
I promised to write to him  
on so I will I conclude with  
kindest love to all of you  
and remain your affec.  
Brother Ben Jefferys  
Shag Valley Station  
Otago <sup>Waikato</sup> ~~Waikato~~

## Sixth Letter

will be better for it you must  
kindly remember me to Mr. A and  
Eve, and Sidas and all the little  
Children especially Percy, Willy  
and Ernest because they know  
me I wish they were here to have  
a ride on one of my horses named  
Cylocan. I bought him for 17 pounds  
the only sport we get here is pig  
hunting 8 of us went one day and  
killed 25 in about 5 hours I have  
a little gold got from the river  
just before here I will send it  
next time to Charly. Dear Father  
you must get a little drop of the  
very best when you get this do not  
be afraid to spend it, to make  
your selves comfortable and  
as it will be getting on towards  
Christmas I wish you all a Merry  
Christmas and a happy new  
year it seems very green to

Shag Valley August 12/75  
My Dear Father and Mother  
I am ashamed that I have  
so long in writing to you  
but I was waiting to go  
to Dunedin to send you a  
little money as I could not  
get an order here I hope  
you are all well and I am  
very happy to say I am well  
and comfortable I wrote  
to Mother on 24 May 1875  
and she has almost got it by  
this time Dear Father and Mother  
I am most happy to enclose a  
P.O. for five Pounds and  
I hope you will receive  
it all right. Dear Mother  
you must tell me how you  
are at present if you are in need  
I will send you an other

five I have been very thrifty  
and mean not to have sent  
it before but I was making  
a point of putting a hundred  
pounds in the bank and I  
spent 44 pounds buying horses  
last year so that I did not  
gain my object until I took  
my wages this year till Charly  
I will write to him  
next mail I hope he gets plenty  
of work all Building Trades  
are good in Otago there is a  
Carpenter working here he gets  
twelve shillings a free day of 8  
hours and his food and lodging  
house rent is very dear in Dunedin  
twelve half a week for a  
small cottage Larry Holman  
ask me what his prospects  
would be supposing he should  
come to do any thing out of  
his trade but his trade is the  
best thing he could work at  
and there is plenty of it to do  
but a married man must often  
be away from his family  
for he may go from one end  
of the Island to the other if he  
wishes for any firm in town I  
will write to him shortly  
Dear Parents you will be getting  
some money by the time you  
receive this I hope you will  
have plenty to keep you warm  
we have had a very little winter  
and very dry there was a little  
snow this morning the first  
we have had this year I believe  
my box is coming to England at  
the new year and one of the men  
there are here there now I am  
glad Dear old has given up  
that hard work I am sure he



have our Christmases in the summer time but we make that a time for sheep and does the sheep shearing is on to at that time so there are plenty of people about you can ask some of the shearers at home what they think about a man shearing one hundred or forty per day for a week and they get a pound per hundred for shearing there was a Mowari near last year shorn 151 in one day at 10 hours I think that would surprise some of the the largest number that was shorn in one day last year by 20 men was five thousand one hundred and seven for getting a first rate in the garden there is 5 more with me now sometimes there were

more I am my own boss in every thing and I get a first rate with them all our people are away at Wellington now I suppose they will be away a good while this time for I think they will have a long session this year and my bus is shearer in the house I will send a paper with this and please let me hear of you and I think I must now come to a close and with my best love to all and every one altho I do not mean them all I wish you all. Good Speed in Prosperity  
see again with kind love  
I remain your opposite

Sam Ben Jeffery



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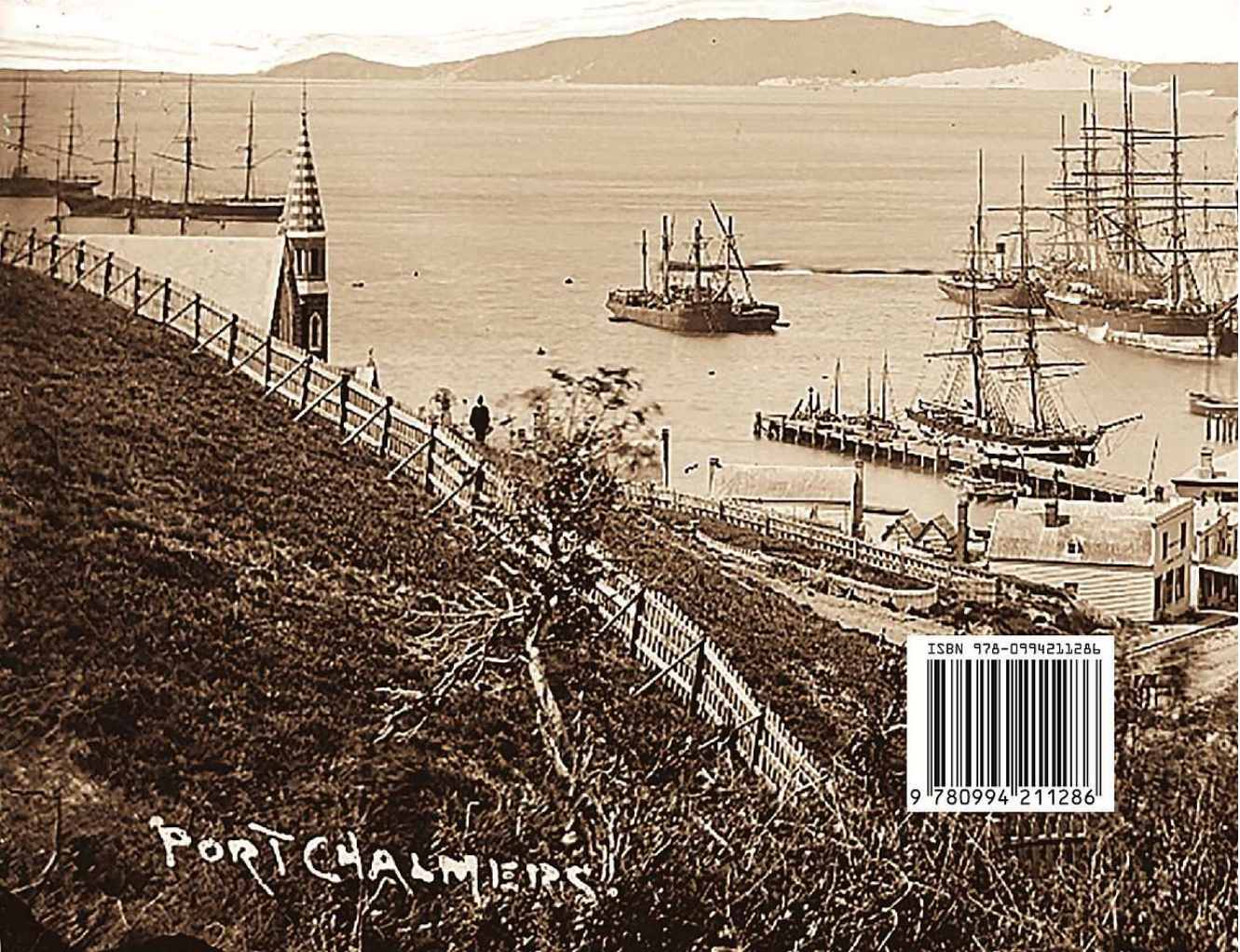




**B**EN JEFFERY WAS BORN IN 1844 IN SUSSEX, ENGLAND. HE STARTED HIS working life as an agricultural labourer (gardener) and in 1872, at 27 years of age, emigrated alone to New Zealand. Six of his letters to his mother and father survive describing his voyage and first three years in the colony. These letters were doubtlessly kept by his mother Harriet who would have treasured them knowing she was never to see her son again. The letters came to the author in a handkerchief box that had been passed down through the family, a treasured reminder of an uncle who had had the courage to search for a better life but, after a few years of correspondence, was never heard from again.

Ben came to New Zealand under the Brogdens' immigration scheme in the early 1870s, a short-lived but significant period in New Zealand's growth as a nation, and consequently his letters are worthy of preservation and publication. His letters and his life story help to bring the history of his time to life.

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